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# LONGMANS' ENGLISH CLASSICS

EDITED BY

GEORGE RICE CARPENTER, A.B.

PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ENGLISH COMPOSITION IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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THOMAS DE QUINCEY

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JOAN OF ARC

AND

THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH



Longmans' English Classics

THOMAS DE QUINCEY'S  
JOAN OF ARC  
AND  
THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

EDITED BY

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN, PH.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC IN YALE UNIVERSITY



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## PREFACE

THE text of this edition is that of De Quincey's own final revision, *Selections, Grave and Gay, from Writings Published and Unpublished* (Edinburgh, James Hogg, 1853-60). Changes by recent editors make the punctuation seem less eccentric, indeed, but also less consistent. Consistently to make De Quincey conform to present usage would involve revision of his sentences. The obvious lack of warrant for this is sufficient reason for letting the text alone. Compromise gives us neither De Quincey's use nor ours; and it has even led to errors. His own revision was so elaborate and minute as to leave no doubt of his final intention. Such eccentricities as an odd version of a proper name here and there have been corrected as inadvertent; but inadvertence to any point of composition being hardly conceivable of De Quincey, his own text has otherwise been reprinted with scrupulous faithfulness.

The introduction and the notes are directed toward making the study of these essays critical, systematic, and well proportioned. Critical, to the extent of comparing methods and of distinguishing the gold from the gravel, the study of De Quincey not only may be, but ought to be. The immortals are to be taken on trust. Study of them is largely learning how to admire. But De Quincey, being less than immortal, being often less than his own better self, invites the student to discriminate, and encourages him to think for himself. To make the study of literature systematic without making it formal and rigid is a problem that this volume seeks to

solve practically. To keep due proportion is, first, to lay main stress on the study of literature, not as history or biography, but as literature; and, secondly, to bring out the author's peculiar quality. With De Quincey this quality is an artistic imagination expressing itself very consciously in skilful technic. Therefore he lends himself readily to the study of rhetoric and to the correlation of the course in literature with the course in composition.

The editor's obligations to his predecessors, acknowledged in place, are here recorded with gratitude. The biographical sketch at the beginning of the introduction is reprinted from the edition of *The Revolt of the Tartars* in this series.

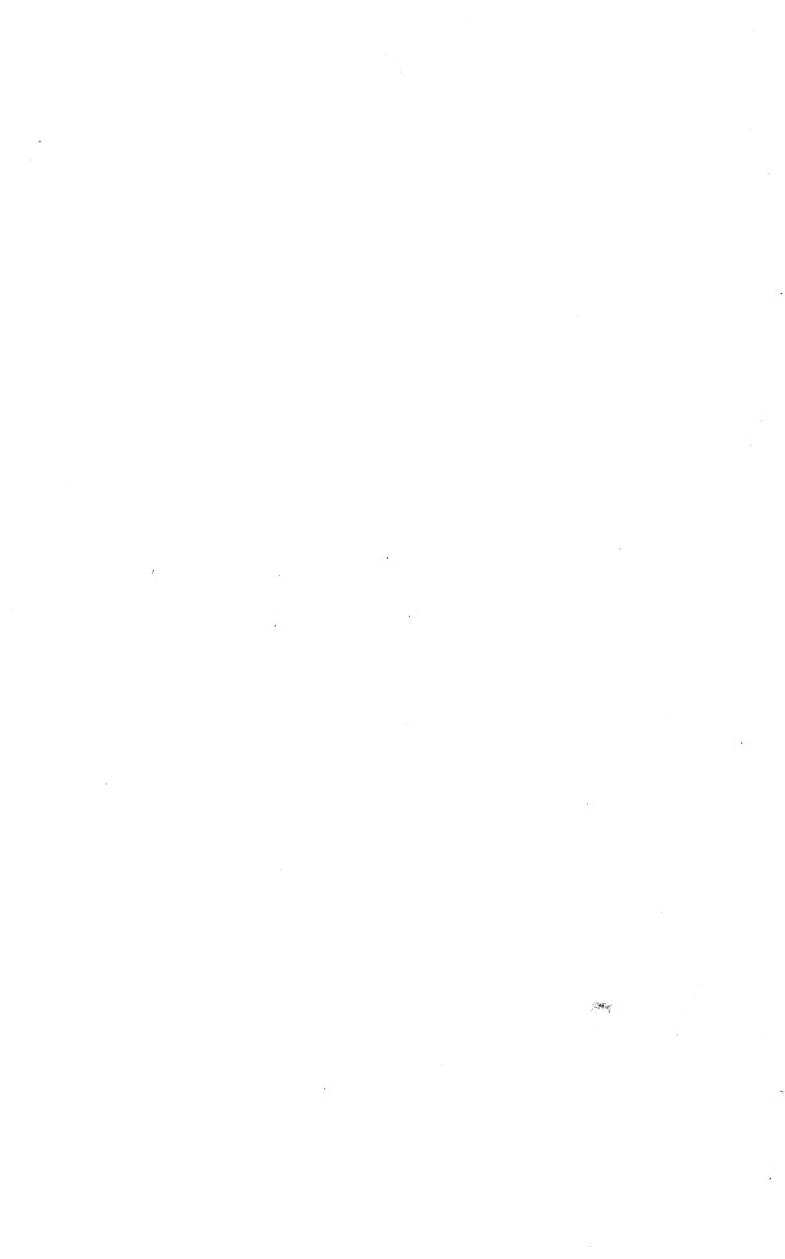
C. S. B.

YALE UNIVERSITY,  
January, 1906.



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## INTRODUCTION

### I. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DE QUINCEY

THE long life of the "English Opium-Eater" (1785-1859) almost covered the history of our country from the Revolution to the Civil War. But he is to be thought of as belonging to the literary movement of the early part of the century, to the time of his boyish idol, Wordsworth, rather than to the time of his later and younger friend Carlyle; to the time of Irving rather than to the time of Emerson. His father was a Manchester merchant of literary tastes, who died early, leaving to his wife and six surviving children an income of about eight thousand dollars a year. The boy Thomas, brought up among girls and women, was thoughtful and imaginative. "From my birth," he says, "I was made an intellectual creature, and intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been even from my schoolboy days."<sup>1</sup> Add that he was finely sensitive, and you will see that such a boy, were he English or French or American, would make his own world of dreams and live in that. He missed the education of cricket and football. No Eton or Rugby forced him to be an English boy. When he was only seven, indeed, his big brother William came home from school and put him through a course of daily brawls with factory boys. At length William was able to bestow this faint praise: "You're honest; you're willing, though lazy; you would pull, if you had the strength of a flea; and, though a

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions.*

monstrous coward, you don't run away."<sup>1</sup> But that is the only physical discipline recorded in a life of intellectual experiences.

"I was sent to various schools, great and small; and was very early distinguished for my classical attainments, especially for my knowledge of Greek. At thirteen I wrote Greek with ease; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but could converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment—an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which, in my case, was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish *extempore*; for the necessity of ransacking my memory and invention for all sorts and combinations of periphrastic expressions, as equivalents for modern ideas, images, relations of things, etc., gave me a compass of diction which would never have been called out by a dull translation of moral essays, etc. 'That boy,' said one of my masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, 'that boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one.' He who honoured me with this eulogy was a scholar, 'and a ripe and good one;' and, of all my tutors, was the only one whom I loved or revered. Unfortunately for me (and, as I afterwards learned, to this worthy man's great indignation), I was transferred to the care, first of a blockhead, who was in a perpetual panic lest I should expose his ignorance; and finally, to that of a respectable scholar, at the head of a great school on an ancient foundation."<sup>2</sup>

Try to pierce through the egotism of the record, which comes, not from vulgar vanity, but from a solitary life, to the high desires and attainments of this precocious boy. True, in his fifteenth year, visiting at Laxton, the country-seat of a family friend, Lady Carbery, he is found acting as literary adviser to the household; but to gain the affection and admiration of this versatile woman, till she was like a sister to him, he must have been more than a prig. The same endearing quality appears in his visit to Ireland

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiographic Sketches*, i. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Confessions*.

with a lad of his own age, Lord Westport, and in the pleasure Lord Westport's father, Lord Altamont, found in talking with the brilliant boy. This middle-aged Irish peer even kept up for some time a correspondence with De Quincey. More than Greek and Latin, then, the boy had learned at fifteen. Many years afterward he could write on the Irish rebellions from the first-hand knowledge he had picked up then in Ireland. He had an open mind. One thing more. He had already discovered Wordsworth's "We are Seven" at a time when the very few people who had heard of Wordsworth, heard only to laugh. He had an independent mind.

The "great school" mentioned above was the Manchester Grammar School, which had been chosen by his guardians because it was entitled to certain scholarships at Oxford. De Quincey despised the master and hated the school. He declared that his health was being undermined for lack of exercise, that he was quite prepared to go up to Oxford. The guardians, with their eyes on the scholarship, rejected all appeals for removal. He asked Lady Carbery to lend him five guineas to help out the two he had left. She sent him ten. Then De Quincey ran away.

"I waited until I saw the trunk placed on a wheelbarrow, and on its road to the carrier's ; then, 'with Providence my guide,' I set off on foot, carrying a small parcel, with some articles of dress, under my arm ; a favourite English poet in one pocket, and a small 12mo volume, containing about nine plays of Euripides, in the other."<sup>1</sup>

When De Quincey ran away at seventeen, he was in thought a man. In practical experience he was neither then nor ever afterward more than a child. But would Wordsworth treat him as a man or as a runaway school-boy? Sorrowfully inclining to the latter view, he gave

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions.*

up his plan of going straight to the Lakes, and went wandering in Wales. No one should read the account of these years of transition anywhere else than in De Quincey's own "Confessions." The mere facts are comparatively insignificant. He slept much out of doors; he wrote letters for bed or food; he studied German with a chance acquaintance; he finally went up to London in the hope of raising money on his prospects. In London he applied to many Jewish money-lenders in vain. His money gone, he walked the streets, sleeping in one of the empty rooms of a house where a pettifogging lawyer carried on some obscure and doubtful business. Hunger and exposure undermined his constitution and gave him a chronic malady of the stomach. None too soon came the reconciliation with the guardians from whom he had been hiding. It was arranged that he should live at the university on £100 a year.

Nothing in the whole life of De Quincey makes less impression upon his readers, or seems to have made less impression upon himself, than Oxford. He entered Worcester College, December 17, 1803, and his name remained on the books till 1810; but he might as well have been reading in any other quiet place. He studied ancient philosophy, German literature, and metaphysics. He dipped into Hebrew with a German named Schwartzburg; he was known to a few as brilliant in conversation. In 1808 he left without a degree; and the explanations of this, both his own and those advanced by his friends and biographers, tend only to strengthen the impression that De Quincey was a *dilettante* rather than a scholar. This period appears among his imaginative reminiscences only in "The English Mail Coach." He dreams, not of the old colleges, the gardens, the river, Magdalen tower—anything that has passed into the heart of any other man of letters—but of the coach that took him to London, of the "glory

of motion," the "under-sense of indefinite danger," "the conscious presence of a central intellect in the midst of vast distances." Nothing could better show his aloofness.

Before definitely leaving Oxford, De Quincey had corresponded at some length with Wordsworth, and had visited Coleridge and Southey. While he was lingering undecided in London, reading a little law, meeting men of letters, he began the systematic use of opium. One of his chief pleasures was to take opium before going to the opera.

"A chorus, etc., of elaborate harmony displayed before me, as in a piece of arras work, the whole of my past life—not as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present and incarnated in the music; no longer painful to dwell upon, but the detail of its incidents removed, or blended in some hazy abstraction, and its passions exalted, spiritualized, and sublimed. All this was to be had for five shillings. And over and above the music of the stage and the orchestra. I had all around me, in the intervals of the performance, the music of the Italian language talked by Italian women—for the gallery was usually crowded with Italians; and I listened with a pleasure such as that with which Weld the traveller lay and listened, in Canada, to the sweet laughter of Indian women; for the less you understand of a language, the more sensible you are to the melody or harshness of its sounds."<sup>1</sup>

Opium was used also to heighten the pleasure of mingling with the London crowd on Saturday night.

"For the sake, therefore, of witnessing upon as large a scale as possible a spectacle with which my sympathy was so entire, I used often on Saturday nights, after I had taken opium, to wander forth, without much regarding the direction or the distance, to all the markets and other parts of London to which the poor resort of a Saturday night for laying out their wages. Many a family party, consisting of a man, his wife, and sometimes one or two of his children, have I listened to, as they stood consulting on their ways and means, or the strength of their exchequer, or the price of household articles."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

His attitude of mind at this time, and, to some extent, throughout his life, appears significantly in the following:

"I, whose disease it was to meditate too much, and to observe too little, and who, upon my first entrance at college, was nearly falling into a deep melancholy, from brooding too much on the sufferings which I had witnessed in London, was sufficiently aware of the tendencies of my own thoughts to do all I could to counteract them. I was, indeed, like a person who, according to the old legend, had entered the cave of Trophonius; and the remedies I sought were to force myself into society, and to keep my understanding in continual activity upon matters of science. But for these remedies I should certainly have become hypochondriacally melancholy. In after years, however, when my cheerfulness was more fully re-established, I yielded to my natural inclination for a solitary life. And, at that time, I often fell into these reveries upon taking opium; and more than once it has happened to me, on a summer night, when I have been at an open window, in a room from which I could overlook the sea at a mile below me, and could command a view of the great town of L—, at about the same distance, that I have sat from sunset to sunrise, motionless, and without wishing to move."<sup>1</sup>

From this unsettled life De Quincey roused himself to go where he had been strongly drawn since boyhood—to the Westmoreland Lakes and the society of those poets who have since been grouped as the Lake School. Coleridge, Southey, and, foremost of all, Wordsworth, were seeking to establish in England a kind of poetry essentially different from the poetry of the eighteenth century. The difference appears most strikingly in two characteristics. The eighteenth century preferred the interests of men and women in the city, and held to a somewhat formal and conventional expression. Wordsworth and his followers preached and practised a "return to nature," that is, a return to the simpler interests of country people, to the love of scenery apart from men and women, and to a more direct and natural expression. Again, the eighteenth

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions.*



century discouraged imagination, whereas imagination was made by these reformers almost the touchstone of true poetry. Though all the great poets of the time caught the spirit of this change, the critics and the public were so slow in following them that for some years the Lake School was a butt of ridicule. It was with the ardour of a disciple, then, that De Quincey, at the age of twenty-four, went to be near his heroes of literature. After living for some time with the Wordsworths at Grasmere, he took a lease of their cottage when they removed to a larger one, filled it with books, and spent about ten years in reading, playing with the Wordsworth children, walking and talking to his heart's content with the poets themselves. He thus describes the Vale of Grasmere:

“Once I absolutely went forwards from Coniston to the very gorge of Hammersear, from which the whole Vale of Grasmere suddenly breaks upon the view in a style of almost theatrical surprise, with its lovely valley stretching before the eye in the distance, the lake lying immediately below, with its solemn, ark-like island of four and a half acres in size seemingly floating on its surface, and its exquisite outline on the opposite shore, revealing all its little bays and wild sylvan margin, feathered to the edge with wild flowers and ferns. In one quarter, a little wood stretching for about half a mile towards the outlet of the lake ; more directly in opposition to the spectator, a few green fields ; and beyond them, just two bow-shots from the water, a little white cottage gleaming from the midst of trees, with a vast and seemingly never-ending series of ascents rising above it to the height of more than three thousand feet.”<sup>1</sup>

The interior of the cottage is described in the “Confessions” :

“Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled in my family the drawing-room ; but being contrived ‘a double debt to pay,’ it is also, and more justly, termed the library,

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiographic Sketches*, ii., 234.

for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbours. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books ; and, furthermore, paint me a good fire ; and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And near the fire paint me a tea-table ; and (as it is clear that no creature can come to see one such a stormy night) place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray ; and if you know how to paint such a thing symbolically, or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot—eternal *à parte ante*, and *à parte post*—for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four o'clock in the morning. . . . The next article brought forward should naturally be myself—a picture of the Opium-eater, with his 'little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug' lying beside him on the table. . . . No ; you may as well paint the real receptacle, which was not of gold, but of glass, and as much like a wine-decanter as possible. Into this you may put a quart of ruby-colored laudanum ; that, and a book of German Metaphysics placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighbourhood."

Literary leisure has rarely been more perfectly realized. To most people, indeed to his own family, he was a recluse ; but to his few intimates he was the most delightful and profitable of companions. Professor Wilson, who was twice De Quincey's size, and differed correspondingly in tastes, loved him dearly. The giant and the dwarf used to ramble interminably together, especially at night. These bachelor habits were hardly modified when, in 1816, De Quincey married Margaret Simpson, daughter of a neighbouring farmer. The marriage led him to curb his alarming consumption of opium, and combined with his habit of giving money away recklessly to force him into writing for a living. But after a few magazine articles, an important examination of Ricardo's political economy, followed by some original work on the same subject, and a futile attempt to edit a country paper, he relapsed into opium depression. It required a supreme effort of will

and the positive need of his wife and children finally to rouse him to systematic effort.

In 1821 De Quincey went to live in London as a regular writer for the new *London Magazine*, just established by the publishers Taylor and Hessey. At their table he met the London literary men of the day, especially Lamb and Hood; and in their magazine appeared the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," which made him famous. Thus he was thirty-six when he came before the public. Indeed, the public might never have heard of him at all but for his need of money. From this time on anecdotes thicken about the little figure of the Opium-Eater. The two things that struck every one most were his wonderful conversation and the confusion in which he worked. Here is a note by Hood:

"When it was my frequent and agreeable duty to call on Mr. de Quincey . . . and I have found him at home, quite at home, in the midst of a German Ocean of literature in a storm, flooding all the floor, the tables, billows of books tossing, tumbling, surging open, on such occasions I have willingly listened by the hour whilst the philosopher, standing with his eyes fixed on one side of the room, seemed to be less speaking than reading from a 'handwriting on the wall.' Now and then he would diverge, for a Scotch mile or two, to the right or left, till I was tempted to inquire with Peregrine in *John Bull*, 'Do you never deviate?' but he always came safely back to the point where he had left, not lost the scent, and thence hunted his topic to the end."<sup>1</sup>

During his six or seven years' residence in London De Quincey's magazine-writing consisted mainly of essays on German and English literature and philosophy, and of translations from the German; but his range was always very wide. On political economy and history he wrote with assurance; on many other subjects with fluency. Gras-

<sup>1</sup> Hood, *Literary Reminiscences* (quoted by Hogg, *De Quincey and his Friends*,\*p. 239).

mere he visited rarely; and in 1828 a growing connection with *Blackwood's Magazine*, through his old friend Professor Wilson, led to the removal of the whole family to Edinburgh.

The Edinburgh period, though essentially one in literary activity, is divided into two parts by other considerations. During the first third the family lived together in town. In 1835 the elder son, a promising boy of eighteen, died of brain fever. In 1837, the year in which "The Revolt of the Tartars" was written, Mrs. De Quincey died. During the last two thirds, De Quincey had a cottage at Lasswade, not far from town, for the benefit of his children. His eldest daughter took charge of the household, and De Quincey, sometimes with them, sometimes in Edinburgh lodgings, sometimes in Glasgow, continued to study and write in seclusion till his death in 1859. He was now famous on both sides of the Atlantic. But though he continued to write without apparent flagging, and though his conversation continued to enchant the few who felt its spell, it is impossible not to see that his afflictions and the ultimate effects of opium had exaggerated his eccentricities into something grotesque and pitiable. He was a slovenly old man, unstrung, often confused. Brilliant he was still, but by flashes; gentle and courteous he could not help being, but he had forgotten how to dress, and he feared society. Through his last years there is a painful groping, a pathetic incompetence. But his power of reflection and expression survived all loss of practical efficiency. That died last. At the end, as at the beginning, he was "an intellectual creature."

"Intellectual creature," indeed, is a phrase that sums up what in the man's life is most memorable. He was purely a man of letters. Macaulay gave years to politics; Scott was anxious to found estates and a noble family; but all De Quincey cared for was first reading and thinking,

and secondarily talking and writing. His was an inner life. He never travelled farther than Ireland, and after his coming to Grasmere the externals of his life are insignificant. A life so self-centred was, of necessity, egotistical, not in vulgar vanity and selfishness, but in habitual spinning out of himself. But, what is more important, it was above all imaginative, moving in the world of art rather than in the world of fact, loving music, speculation, mystery.

It is only to look upon these traits from another side to add that he was abstracted, eccentric, incompetent in every-day matters. "I have just set my hair on fire," he remarks casually in a letter to his publisher. During the Edinburgh period his lodgings became, as he expressed it, "snowed up;" that is, the confusion of books and papers reached the point of crowding out the author. His remedy was very simple. He locked the door, took other lodgings, and began afresh. When one knows that this happened more than once, it is easier to believe the anecdotes current about this period.

"His clothes had generally a look of extreme age, and also of having been made for a person somewhat larger than himself. I believe the real cause of this was that he had got much thinner in those later years, whilst he wore, and did wear, I suppose till the end of his life, the clothes that had been made for him years before. I have sometimes seen appearances about him of a shirt and shirt-collar, but usually there were no indications of these articles of dress. When I came to visit him in his lodgings, I saw him in all stages of costume; sometimes he would come in to me from his bedroom to his parlour, as on this occasion, with shoes, but no stockings, and sometimes with stockings, but no shoes. When in bed, where I also saw him from time to time, he wore a large jacket—not exactly an under-jacket, but a jacket made in the form of a coat, of white flannel; something like a cricketer's coat in fact. In the street his appearance was equally singular. He walked with considerable rapidity (he said walking was the only athletic exercise in which he had ever excelled) and with an odd, one-sided, and yet straight-

forward motion, moving his legs only, and neither his arms, head, nor any other part of his body—like Wordsworth's cloud—

‘Moving altogether, if he moved at all.’

His hat, which had the antediluvian aspect characteristic of the rest of his clothes, was generally stuck on the back of his head, and no one who ever met that antiquated figure, with that strangely dreamy and intellectual face, working its way rapidly, and with an oddly deferential air, through any of the streets of Edinburgh—a sight certainly by no means common, for he was very seldom to be seen in town—could ever forget it. He was very fond of walking, but generally his walks were merely into town to his publisher's office (Mr. Hogg's, then in Nicolson Street) and back again to Lasswade. Till he was nearly seventy he took this walk—one of twelve miles—without inconvenience.”<sup>1</sup>

“Roofed by a huge wide-awake, which makes his tiny figure look like the stalk of some great fungus, with a lantern of more than common dimensions in his hand, away he goes down the wooded path, up the steep bank, along the brawling stream, and across the waterfall—and ever as he goes there comes from him a continued stream of talk, concerning the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, and other kindred matters. Surely if we two were seen by any human eyes, it must have been supposed that some gnome, or troll, or kelpie, was luring the listener to his doom. The worst of such affairs as this, was the consciousness that, when left, the old man would continue walking on until, weariness overcoming him, he would take his rest, wherever that happened, like some poor mendicant. He used to denounce, with his most fervid eloquence, that barbarous and brutal provision of the law of England, which rendered sleeping in the open air an act of vagrancy, and so punishable, if the sleeper could not give a satisfactory account of himself—a thing which Papaverius never could give under any circumstances.”<sup>2</sup>

“For instance, those who knew him a little might call him a loose man in money matters; those who knew him closer laughed at the idea of coupling any notion of pecuniary or other like responsibility with his nature. You might as well attack the character of the nightingale, which may have nipped up your five-pound note and

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Findlay (*Hogg, ibid.*, p. 129).

<sup>2</sup> John Hill Burton, *The Book Hunter* (chapter entitled “Papaverius,” quoted by Hogg, *ibid.*, p. 254).

torn it into shreds to serve as nest-building material. Only immediate, craving necessities could ever extract from him an acknowledgment of the common vulgar agencies by which men subsist in civilised society, and only while the necessity lasted did the acknowledgment exist. Take just one example, which will render this clearer than any generalities. He arrives very late at a friend's door, and on gaining admission—a process in which he often endured impediments—he represents with his usual silver voice and measured rhetoric the absolute necessity of his being then and there invested with a sum of money in the current coin of the realm, the amount limited, from the nature of his necessities, which he very freely states, to seven shillings and sixpence. Discovering, or fancying he discovers, signs that his eloquence is likely to be unproductive, he is fortunately reminded that, should there be any difficulty in connection with security for the repayment of the loan, he is at that moment in possession of a document, which he is prepared to deposit with the lender—a document calculated, he cannot doubt, to remove a feeling of anxiety which the most prudent person could experience in the circumstances. After a rummage in his pockets, which develops miscellaneous and varied, but as yet by no means valuable possessions, he at last comes to the object of his search, a crumpled bit of paper, and spreads it out—a fifty-pound bank-note! The friend, who knew him well, was of opinion that, had he, on delivering over the seven shillings and sixpence, received the bank-note, he would never have heard anything more of the transaction from the other party.”<sup>1</sup>

Of course it is easy to exaggerate the impression of De Quincey's abstraction. He read the papers and was interested in current events, though he was prone to reflect away from the facts. His conversation, too, was a strong link between him and his fellows. But though this often started among current events, or even in commonplaces, it was almost sure to become imaginative, speculative, sometimes almost rhapsodic. This was the man's great charm, the charm that attached to him a brilliant follow-

<sup>1</sup> John Hill Burton, *The Book Hunter* (chapter entitled “Papa-verius,” quoted by Hogg, *ibid.*, p. 255).

ing and a romantic interest, heightening his fame to this day. His essay on "Conversation" shows his ideals and gives some hint of his power. What he was in congenial company appears in the following:

"He did not quite, as Burton had told me he would do, talk magazine articles, but the literary habit was notable, though not in the least obtrusive, in all his talk. One effect of this was somewhat trying to an inexperienced listener; for when in the flow of his conversation he came to the close of one of his beautifully rounded and balanced paragraphs, he would pause in order to allow you to have your say, with the result sometimes of rather taking one aback, especially as the subject of conversation often seemed to have been brought, by his conduct of it, to its complete and legitimate conclusion. The listener was apt to feel that he had perorated rather than paused. In his mode of conversing, as in everything else, his courtesy of manner was observable. He never monopolised talk, allowed every one to have a fair chance, and listened with respectful patience to the most commonplace remarks from any one present. The fact that any one was, for the time, a member of the company in which he also happened to be, evidently in his eyes entitled the speaker to all consideration and respect. But he had a just horror of bores, and carefully avoided them."<sup>1</sup>

"His voice was extraordinary; it came as if from dreamland; but it was the most musical and impressive of voices. In convivial life, what then seemed to me the most remarkable trait of De Quincey's character, was the power he possessed of easily changing the tone of ordinary thought and conversation into that of his own dreamland, till his auditors, with wonder, found themselves moving pleasantly along with him in a sphere of which they might have heard and read, perhaps, but which had ever appeared to them inaccessible, and far, far away. Seeing that he was always good-natured and social, he would take part, at commencement, in any sort of tattle or twaddle. The talk might be of 'beeves,' and he could grapple with them if expected to do so, but his musical cadences were not in keeping with such work, and in a few minutes (not without some strictly logical sequence) he could escape at will from beeves to butterflies, and thence to the soul's immortality; to Plato, and Kant, and Schelling, and Fichte; to Milton's early years, and Shakespeare's sonnets; to

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Findlay, *ibid.*, p. 127.



Wordsworth and Coleridge; to Homer and Æschylus; to St. Thomas of Aquin, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom. But he by no means excluded themes from real life, according to his view of that life, but would recount profound mysteries from his own experiences—visions that had come over him in his loneliest walks among the mountains, and passages within his own personal knowledge, illustrating, if not proving, the doctrines of dreams, of warnings, of second sight, and mesmerism. And whatever the subject might be, every one of his sentences (or of his chapters, I might say) was woven into the most perfect logical texture, and uttered in a tone of sustained melody.”<sup>1</sup>

“Presently the flood of talk passes forth from them, free, clear, and continuous—never rising into declamation, never losing a certain mellow earnestness, and all consisting of sentences as exquisitely jointed together as if they were destined to challenge the criticism of the remotest posterity. Still the hours stride over each other, and still flows on the stream of gentle rhetoric, as if it were *labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum*. It is now far into the night, and slight hints and suggestions are propagated about separation and home-going. The topic starts new ideas on the progress of civilisation, the effect of habit on man in all ages, and the power of the domestic affections. Descending from generals to the special, he could testify to the inconvenience of late hours; for, was it not the other night that, coming to what was, or what he believed to be, his own door, he knocked and knocked, but the old woman within either couldn’t or wouldn’t hear him, so he scrambled over a wall, and having taken his repose in a furrow, was able to testify to the extreme unpleasantness of such a couch. The predial groove might indeed nourish kindly the infant seeds and shoots of the peculiar vegetable to which it was appropriated, but was not a comfortable place of repose for adult man.”<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps, indeed, he found his most natural expression in talking rather than in writing, and certainly his writing has the discursive character of talk.

With the exception of “The Logic of Political Economy” and the unimportant novel “Klosterheim,” De Quincey’s work consists entirely of articles for the reviews.

<sup>1</sup> R. P. Gillies, *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*, *ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> John Hill Burton, *The Book Hunter*, *ibid.*, p. 252.

These cover a very great range of subjects,<sup>1</sup> following his reading, which was wide rather than deep. He made pretensions to scholarship in many fields, but he seems never to have carried on any long and connected research. He was bookish; he preferred reading to writing, his work sometimes "smells of the lamp," and he delights in pedantic foot-notes; but he cannot, except in the precision of his language, be called scholarly. This characteristic of his work is typical both of his habit of mind and of his time.

As a critic his value is perhaps overestimated. On the one hand, he shares with Coleridge and Carlyle the credit of introducing English readers to German literature and philosophy. He was also among the first to appreciate the new poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and to contend for its just place in literature. On the other hand, he failed to appreciate French literature, slighted Goethe, scorned Crabbe, preferred Dickens to Thackeray, and ventured to attack the Republic of Plato. The ability to give the average reader a more intelligent interest in literature, and to lead him toward culture, though it is less evident than in Macaulay and Hazlitt, is proved by his illuminative essay "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth."

In any case De Quincey's value as a critic is not the measure of his excellence. His most popular and interesting works, the works by which he himself set most store, are those pieces of imaginative reminiscence beginning with the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," and proceeding through the "Suspiria de Profundis" (including "Levana," "Savannah-la-Mar," etc.), and the "Autobiographic Sketches," to "The English Mail-Coach." Not only did these catch the

<sup>1</sup> For classification, see De Quincey's general preface to his own collective edition (*Selections, Grave and Gay*, etc., Edinburgh, James Hogg, 1853-60); Professor Masson's *Life and his revised Edinburgh edition*; Dr. Hodgson's *Genius of De Quincey (Outcast Essays, reprinted in Hogg's De Quincey and his Friends)*, and Professor Turk's introduction (*Selections*, etc., v.).

taste of the time ;<sup>1</sup> they also hold a peculiar place in English literature.

## II. DE QUINCEY'S LITERARY METHOD

(See the account of the composition and revision of "The English Mail-Coach," at page 106.)

### 1. *De Quincey's Handling of the Essay Form*

The literary form of these pieces is De Quincey's habitual form, the essay. Like Macaulay, Carlyle, Lowell, like Addison, Swift, and Johnson in the previous century, he was an essayist. The mere mention of these well-known users of the essay form reminds us that it has been used most variously. An essay by Macaulay has little resemblance to an essay by Lamb ; and neither of them resembles an essay by Carlyle. In fact, the term essay is applied rather largely and loosely. Of all the names of literary forms it is the least definite, because there is a comparative lack of definiteness in the form itself. Story, speech, drama, — each of these terms conveys at once a clear notion of the form of the piece to which it is applied. But to say that a piece is an essay does not give so definite an idea of what it is like. Still, the term has a meaning, which, though wide, is sufficiently clear. For the essay form, though less fixed than the others, is still recognisable as a literary form, and has an important place in literature.

An essay deals with ideas. Unlike a story or a drama, it gives, instead of the actions and words that we see and hear, reflections for our thought. An essay is not a reflection of life, but a reflection on life. It tries to tell what things mean, — to explain their significance, to give clues by which we may see the relation of one idea to another, and so to

<sup>1</sup> Note, for instance, some of Hawthorne's shorter pieces ; and, later, Mitchell's *Reveries of a Bachelor* and *Dream Life*.

classify and organise our knowledge, — in a word, to explain. Thus De Quincey's "Joan of Arc" aims, not to tell the thrilling story of her life, but to show her place in history, to suggest the significance of her suffering, to explain what her life means. For the object of an essay is to reach some underlying ideas.

This aim of the essay is most commonly pursued by an orderly development through a logical series of paragraphs. Each paragraph is a stage of thought, fitted to its place, doing its part toward making a clear and sound whole. In its structure, that is, an essay is commonly like a speech. It may, indeed, be less rigidly held to a single logical line, because it is not addressed to any single audience; but its order is usually a logical order, and its paragraphs are usually very like the paragraphs of a speech. In this regard, an essay by Matthew Arnold is like a speech by Burke, an essay by Bacon like a speech by St. Paul. In either case alike, the line of thought may be laid bare by summing up each paragraph in a sentence and reading these sentences consecutively.

But though this is the common method of the essay, it is not the only method. It is Macaulay's method, but not De Quincey's. For the essay form may also be used to set forth ideas not so much by orderly explanation as by suggestions addressed to the imagination. Instead of developing his thought logically, as a teacher explains to a class, the essayist may suggest it more imaginatively, by a larger use of descriptive appeal. This latter way was always followed by De Quincey's contemporaries Lamb and Hazlitt; it was often used by Carlyle and Lowell, and occasionally by many other essayists. Ideally an essay combines the two methods; it has both logical order to satisfy the reason, and descriptive appeal to stimulate the imagination. And some of the best essays owe their eminence to just this happy combination. But more usually an author will be found so strongly to prefer one method that he neglects the other. De Quincey cared so

much more for appeal to the imagination that he paid little heed to logical order. In analysis, he does, indeed, show logical power; but in synthesis, in composition, he commonly disregards logical development, and devotes himself exclusively to awakening the reader's imagination.

These two methods of composing an essay, the logical and the suggestive, correspond roughly to De Quincey's own brilliant division of literature into "the literature of knowledge" and "the literature of power." "The function of the first," he says, "is to *teach*; the function of the second is to *move*: the first is a rudder, the second an oar or sail. The first speaks to the *mere* discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always *through* affections of pleasure and sympathy" (*Essay on Pope*).

But it will not do to think of these two ideals as totally distinct. To some extent, the latter must always depend on the former; the transmission of the "power" will be checked by imperfect transmission of the "knowledge"; the "sail" flaps without a "rudder." It is just here that De Quincey's method has an essential weakness. He had not only a strong predilection for "the literature of power," but also a constitutional incapacity for satisfying the demands of "the literature of knowledge." It is an evident defect, as evident as his many excellences, that he cannot convey information in any clear order. His composition is not merely informal and suggestive, like Lamb's and Hazlitt's; it is actually incoherent. Even where he indicates a line of thought, he never hesitates to deviate from it, or even to abandon it altogether. In the first volume of his "Autobiographic Sketches," for example, the piece entitled "The Nation of London," opens as follows, the parentheses indicating digressions:

I. London exercises a visible attraction throughout the kingdom (two-page foot-note on ancient Rome).

II. Our approach was through rural suburbs, not by any great road [On the great roads how different the approach! (1) in the premonitions of the metropolis (note on *trepidation* and *agitation*), (2) in the sense of losing one's identity in the throng — two pages].

III. I remember the awe of our arrival.

IV. What should we go to see? There were so many things to see that we could decide on nothing. [I have had in my life three great disappointments (1) in a painting of Cape Horn (just as people have been disappointed (though, by the way, less reasonably) in the view from Mount Etna, one page); (2) in Garrick's farewell; (3) in the inauguration of George IV. (the very idea of Garrick's farewell was as absurd as our present dilemma — one page)].

In like manner, "The English Mail-Coach" is made up of disconnected parts. Section I breaks off abruptly; and section II is virtually another essay (see page 106). The same kind of breach is evident between the two parts of the essay on "Conversation." In "Joan of Arc" the first two paragraphs and the last three are an eloquent reverie, constitute a fairly unified whole, and contain most of the essay's virtue. But between these two groups is inserted a long review of Michelet's history, perhaps written at a different time, and certainly interrupting and disturbing the impression of the rest. Nor do these ill-matched parts show much care for coherence within themselves. There is little real connection in "The English Mail-Coach" between the two parts of Section I, and still less within its first part. The long interpolation in "Joan of Arc" follows no distinct order. To sum up each paragraph in a sentence, as is done above for the "Autobiographic Sketches" is to reveal De Quincey's wide and careless rambling.

This habit of corkscrewing through an essay is due somewhat to the fact that from such magazine articles the editors and their readers expected, not the development of a definite

line of thought on a fixed subject, but a stream of literary talk. Often, in fact, there is, properly speaking, no subject. One of these articles is simply so many pages of reminiscence or discussion, brought to a graceful close when the author was tired, or the editor had no more space. But the habit is due mainly to De Quincey's vivid imagination. One picture called up another, until sometimes his very strength in suggestion betrayed him into weakness in composition.

To whatever due, this discursive habit is De Quincey's great fault—a fault that runs through most of his work. What was pardonable in reminiscence became unpardonable in other essays. It is not enough to say that he never lost his way, that he eventually came back to the point, or even that the digressions are often delightful in themselves. There is no denying the grave defect in art.

To cover this fault, De Quincey makes large use of connective words. Real connection of thought he does without; but he is careful of apparent connection, that is of connectives. Though paragraph III (pages 42–44) of “The English Mail-Coach” lacks the unity of a single stage of thought, deviating from Oxford to the social distinctions between “outsides” and “insides,” the opening words of paragraph IV tie these two ideas together: “Such being, at that time, the usage of mail-coaches, what was to be done by us of young Oxford?” “Great wits jump,” begins paragraph VI (page 46). “The very same idea had not long before struck the celestial intellect of China.” “I mention this little incident,” begins paragraph XII (page 53) “for its connection with what followed.” In these cases, and in general, as may be proved by further examination, there is not so much an internal connection of ideas as a mere superficial connection of words.

De Quincey's method, then, was directed toward engaging not so much the reader's reasoning and reflection as the reader's imagination. The value of his essays is not for information, but for suggestion. In fact, as subject-matter De

Quincey's essays are rarely of any importance. The central incident of "The English Mail-Coach" is very slight. Stated in its bare facts, it is even trivial. A pair of lovers, driving at night, just escaped being upset by a mail-coach. No physical harm was done; but the young lady was agitated. These commonplace facts worked on De Quincey's imagination; and he has made them work on ours. "The incident, so memorable . . . by its features of horror, and so scenical by its grouping for the eye . . . furnished the *text* for this reverie" (page 73). In "Joan of Arc" and in "The Revolt of the Tartars" the facts are of great importance for themselves. They have the larger historical significance. But De Quincey's method is the same. In spite of his pretence of research, he took no pains to determine what were the facts. He even fell at times into foolish errors. Nor did he take pains to develop from the facts any clear line of thought. He simply and solely cared to realize an imaginative conception, to body forth a kind of vision. Bergmann's narrative of the flight of a Tartar tribe suggested to his imagination vivid pictures of great empires, vast distances, unspeakable horror, and misery. These pictures are the basis and strength of "The Revolt of the Tartars." All the rest is subsidiary, — sometimes striking or penetrative, sometimes mistaken or absurd, but essentially subsidiary. In short, the piece is not so much history as poetry. The same method he applied to the story of Joan of Arc. In most of De Quincey's work, indeed in all his characteristic work, the fact is merely a point of departure, "the text for this reverie"; the imagination is all.

De Quincey's work stands or falls, then, by its imaginative effects. He himself conceived it as a kind of prose-poetry, calling it "impassioned prose" (see below, page xxxiv). This is no small ambition. Its success is measured by its power to hold the reader, to keep him under the spell. Naturally, therefore, his most successful pieces, such as "Levana," and "Savannah-la-Mar," are short. Emotional excitement of the



imagination is very difficult to sustain. Even Poe, who was a master of this art, regarded as one of its essentials brevity. De Quincey's longer pieces fail to sustain the emotion. They rise; but presently they lapse or even fall. It is not his "Joan of Arc" as a whole that keeps us on the heights; it is the opening and the close, and a passage or two between. So the successive variations on the "Dream-Fugue" move us, not as the climax of an emotional scale, but as separate short flights. Perhaps from the very nature of his attempt, any of De Quincey's long essays seems uneven and fitful. Discarding the support of logical form, and venturing as it were into the air, he could rise and soar, but he could not long stay up.

## 2. *De Quincey's Paragraphs.*

The method of the whole of course affects the details. The thought is not conducted by such stages as would make logically clear paragraphs. The first paragraph of "Joan of Arc" can hardly be regarded as a logical unit. Rather it seems to be three paragraphs, the first ending "her feet were dust," the second ending "deaf for five centuries." But if De Quincey's paragraphs are not always logically unified, they are none the less composed usually with clear method and singular skill. For De Quincey paid far more attention to the details of structure than to the plan of the whole (see above). His prose is to French prose somewhat as an English cathedral is to a French cathedral. The English work often shows the highest artistic sense in detail. It is brilliant or grand or lovely in porch or arch or tower; but it has not the strength and beauty of the whole, the entirety of Amiens. The opening of "Joan of Arc" is like the noble porch of Peterborough; and the paragraphs that follow are like the lower nave behind it.

How well De Quincey understood the development of a paragraph is plain from his abundant variety of means. The opening paragraph of "Joan of Arc" is developed by

comparison and contrast; the ninth paragraph (page 11) by picturesque instances; the twenty-eighth (page 73) of "The English Mail-Coach" by progressive iteration of a single sentence. His copiousness in this regard is worth the study of any one who wishes to achieve practically what the old rhetorics call "amplification." No less noteworthy is his skill in connectives (see page xxix). Few authors show so great a variety of conjunctions. Beside him Macaulay is poor. Whereas Macaulay will make shift for pages with "and" and "but," De Quincey shows in the first pages of "The English Mail-Coach" "therefore," "yet," "now," "finally," "in fact," "on the contrary," "again"; and this is but a tithe of his list. Nor are conjunctions his favourite connectives. Rather he prefers the demonstratives, "this," "that," "here," etc., or the repetition of an emphatic word. The remarkable twenty-eighth paragraph of "The English Mail-Coach" is knit throughout by the iteration of the word *dream*. The first paragraph of "Joan of Arc" marks the theme of the whole essay by the epithets successively applied to the Maid — "poor shepherd girl," "gentle girl," "poor forsaken girl," "pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl," "daughter of Domrémy," "poor shepherd girl," "pure creature," "holy child"; and at the same time by phrases successively indicating her tragic destiny. In development and in connection De Quincey's paragraphs show a high technical skill.

### 3. *De Quincey's Sentences.*

No less careful and sure are his sentences. Most of the effects of sentence arrangement that are taught in text-books of rhetoric are exemplified in these two essays. Through this skilful variety appears a distinct preference for sentences rather long and deliberate. He was too reflective, too fond of fine distinctions and qualifications, to cultivate the loose, brisk style of disconnected short sentences. Even in descriptive or humorous passages, as at page 48, he rarely shortens his

stride. The long involved sentence on page 20 was even longer and more loose in the original magazine article. It read:—"Joanna's history bisects . . . in the latter;—this might have been done—it might have been communicated to a fellow-prisoner, or a confessor, by Joanna herself, in the same way that Virgil has contrived to acquaint the reader, through the hero's mouth, with earlier adventures that, if told by the poet speaking in his own person, would have destroyed the unity of his fable." But his favourite form was the periodic or suspended sentence: "We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insides themselves as often very questionable characters—were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignities?" (page 44). Hardly a page but has sentences of this suspended form. De Quincey may have caught it either directly from his favourite Greek and Latin classics or indirectly from Sir Thomas Browne and his other favourite seventeenth-century English authors. No trait of his style is more characteristic.

#### 4. *De Quincey's Diction.*

In his choice of words De Quincey is what used to be called in the eighteenth century elegant. His vocabulary is exceptionally large (see page 109), and his use of it exceptionally nice. Few readers can appreciate it at its full without a dictionary; and few writers will better endure, or better repay, the scrutiny. But this virtue leans toward a vice. The words of his preference are often too abstract to make any direct appeal. "Some burden of commissions to be executed in Bath, which had gathered to her own residence as a central rendezvous for converging them" (page 56) — "the elaborate arrangement of laurels in their hats dilates their hearts" (page 62) — "the oblique and lateral communications with many rural post-offices" (page 74) — for description, the words seem gratuitously abstract and Latin. They suggest more care for

dignity, precision, and sonority than for force. Homely force of directness, of course, is not to be expected of De Quincey. Whether he could have attained it or not if he had tried, certainly he did not try. He had no wish to be hail-fellow-well-met with the great public. He addressed himself to readers of some culture and literary taste. But even with such readers he cannot escape the charge of over-indulging his fondness for recondite words and unusual applications, and even of lapses into pedantry. "Prelibation" (page 61) and "nostalgia" (page 26) are among the many instances of mere grandiloquence. Having indulged himself in a legal use of the word "constructively" at page 45, he repeats it quite unnecessarily at page 46, and again at page 51. The case would be of no importance if it were not typical of De Quincey's habit of choosing words for himself rather than for his readers. Rather than deny himself the pleasure, he will explain himself in a pedantic parenthesis or foot-note. Nay, he will even use parenthesis, digression, or foot-note for no apparent purpose except the display of learning. For it is impossible to read De Quincey attentively without becoming aware both of his true elegance, his admirable aptness and discrimination, and also of his false elegance, his artificiality and pedantry. Perhaps that is because he thought too much of style for the sake of style.

Certainly his style is self-conscious. It is so carefully elaborated that it sometimes calls attention to itself. Moreover it is the style of a man that had a theory of style. Not only did he write essays on "Style" and "Rhetoric," but he cultivated an imaginative, emotional expression which he called "impassioned prose":

'On these (i. e., Confessions, Suspiria, etc.), as modes of impassioned prose ranging under no precedents that I am aware of in any literature, it is much more difficult to speak justly. . . . Two remarks only shall I address to the equity of my reader. First, I desire to remind him of the perilous difficulty besieging all attempts

to clothe in words the visionary scenes derived from the world of dreams, where a single false note, a single word in a wrong key, ruins the whole music; and, secondly, I desire him to consider the utter sterility of universal literature in this one department of impassioned prose." *Autobiographic Sketches*, I, xvii (Hogg's Edition).

What this means in general method has been already discussed. In detail the "impassioned prose" is felt at once as highly figurative and sometimes oratorical. Beneath these obvious qualities is something more distinctive. The "impassioned prose" is rhythmical and alliterative.<sup>1</sup> "Bishop of Beauvais! thy victim died in fire," — this eloquent peroration will yield most striking results if analyzed as to its cadences and recurrences. It should be read aloud.

Mr. Swinburne vents his ire at "the detestable as well as debatable land of pseudo-poetic rhapsody . . . after the least admirable manner of such writers as De Quincey" (*Miscellanies*, pages 222-23: Tennyson and Musset). But every imaginative emotional expression demands for just appreciation some sympathy. True, instead of putting forward his conception of the finer art of prose as new, De Quincey might more safely have taken warrant from the doctrine of the ancients and the practice of his favourite Sir Thomas Browne. But, new or old, it may fairly be judged by its actual effects, by its power to move readers of some intellectual and emotional sympathy. So judging, one sees, indeed, those defects to which De Quincey himself knew his effort to be peculiarly liable, but also feels, in spite of these, a strong uplifting of imagination.

"A single false note," says De Quincey, "a single word in a wrong key, ruins the whole music." Some of his work, notably "Levana" and most of the "Dream-Fugue," may be said literally to fulfill this ideal of prose harmony. But in other pieces the harmony is occasionally jarred. The tone of

<sup>1</sup> For detailed analysis see Baldwin's *College Manual of Rhetoric*, fourth edition, pages 226-228.

the passage (page 80) beginning "Moonlight and the first timid tremblings of the dawn" is disturbed by "the villain of a schoolmaster." "The raving of hurricanes" (page 86) is hardly the moment for such nice mathematics as "stood rather obliquely and not quite so far advanced as to be accurately parallel with the near wheel." "The unknown lady from the dreadful vision (page 89) and I myself are floating — she upon a fairy pinnacle, and I upon an *English three-decker*." The paragraph (XVII) describing the "natural associations" in his dreams of a certain fair Fanny with grotesque and fearsome monsters pushes incongruity perilously near to bathos. The chatty humour of parts of the "Joan of Arc" is most irritating precisely to those who are most sympathetic with the opening and the close. Such lapses show in detail the same lack that appears in the conception and method of the whole (page xxxi), a lack of power to sustain.

Yet when all has been subtracted from De Quincey's prose that is not of his best, the remainder, though smaller than his admirers of forty years ago would have admitted, is still considerable. In spite of faults more apparent to our time than to his, it seems to have an assured place in our literature. Readers of to-day must beware of judging him by a standard he would not have owned; and they have something to learn from his ideal of elegant precision subservient to a high imagination.

### III. NOTES FOR TEACHERS

#### 1. *The Meaning.*

The first impressions of a piece of literature should usually come, not from opinions about it, nor from the biography of its author, but from the piece itself. In starting a class thus immediately upon the text, the first consideration is the meaning. A rather rapid preliminary reading of both essays may well be made with this view alone. Let the study of the

meaning be something more than the pursuit of "allusions"; let it aim at an intelligent comprehension (1) of the subject-matter in its general significance, (2) of such details as indicate either this general significance or De Quincey's habit in choosing material. There is a real danger, with so allusive an author, that the student will make his note-book a mere rag-bag of miscellaneous and insignificant information. Therefore he must be taught to fix his attention on the important aspects, and to group his notes with these as headings.

The notes in this edition deliberately avoid supplying such information as should be sought in ordinary books of reference. They presuppose access to :

1. a large dictionary, such as the "Century" or the "Standard";
2. a cyclopædia;
3. a standard history of each great European nation, or a general compendium of history such as Fisher's "Outlines of Universal History," or Tillinghast's Translation of Pløetz's "Epitome of Ancient, Mediæval, and Modern History." The latter are sufficient for the placing of the great events mentioned by De Quincey.

Such books should be in every school library, if they are not at hand in the town library. Consultation of them is an important part of schooling.

Thus the main facts concerning Joan of Arc may be brought out in carefully assigned reports by individual students, and compiled by the class as a background of history. The results will be every way better than from any rehearsal of separate facts as they come up in the text. But since De Quincey does not give a consecutive account of Joan of Arc ("I am not going to write the history of *La Pucelle*," page 7), and since the story is of absorbing interest, some time may well be spent in hearing students read aloud, after preparation, some brief and simple narrative; e. g. the story told in

the beautifully illustrated edition of M. Boutet de Monvel ("Jeanne d'Arc"), which has been translated into English.

The findings of the shameful trial of 1429-1430 were set aside, twenty years later (1449-1456), on thorough review of the evidence and the processes at law, at the instance of Pope Calixtus; and formal sentence of "rehabilitation" was pronounced in 1456. In 1869 certain French prelates began a movement for Joan's canonisation. The processes, interrupted by the Franco-Prussian war, have extended through many years, and are not yet completed.

"On January 27, 1894, the Congregation of Sacred Rites, on the report of Cardinal Parocchi, voted to recommend that the commission for the introduction of the case ('Commissio introductionis causae servae Dei Joannae d'Arc'), so-called, should be signed, which was immediately done by the Pope. This action is the first step toward canonisation, and confers upon Joan the title of 'Venerable.'"<sup>1</sup>

On May 5, 1896, "it was decreed that there had always existed a public veneration of her as a saintly person. On January 17, 1901, and December 18, 1903, the heroic character of her virtues was recognised by the Congregation of Rites. The latest action of the Holy See . . . is dated January 6, 1904. It recognises that she exercised in a heroic degree the virtues of faith, hope, and charity; also those of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance; finally, that a certain number of miracles had been performed at her intercession. This action is only a further step in the formal process of canonisation."<sup>2</sup> Meantime the Maid is revered, even by

<sup>1</sup> Francis C. Lowell, *Joan of Arc*, page 372.

<sup>2</sup> The editor is indebted to the Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Shahan, Professor of Church History in the Catholic University of America, for the above summary of items in *Acta Sanctae Sedis* relating to the case of Joan of Arc. The latest action is noted in volume xxxvi, pages 429-432. Professor Shahan adds that volume xxvii, page 488, has "a synopsis of the life of Joan of Arc, which, I think, represents the work of the Orléans Diocesan Commission that was appointed in 1877 to collect and verify the facts and lay them before the Congregation of Rites."



many whose allegiance to the Church is rather loose, as a sacred embodiment of the French national idea.

An authoritative publication (in the original Latin) of the trial and the rehabilitation was compiled by M. Jules Quicherat ("Procès de condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc, dite La Pucelle, publiés pour la première fois d'après les manuscrits," etc., Paris, 1841-49). This is the ultimate source of information. The facts of Joan's whole career, here given in minute detail, are at once amazing and thoroughly substantiated. De Quincey alludes to this work (note to page 7), but had not seen it. A French translation, classified and annotated, was made by E. O'Reilly ("Les deux procès de condamnation, les enquêtes, et la sentence de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc, mis pour la première fois intégralement en français, d'après les textes latins originaux officiels, avec notes," etc., 2 vols., Paris, 1868). An English translation, with a simple narrative introduction, notes and appendices, was made by T. Douglas Murray ("Jeanne d'Arc, Maid of Orleans, Deliverer of France; being the story of her life, her achievements, and her death, as attested on oath and set forth in the original documents"; New York, McClure, Phillips & Co., 1902).

De Quincey's source is Michelet ("Histoire de France," vol. v, pages 40-167 of the revised edition in 17 vols., Paris, 1861; i. e., book x, chapters iii and iv). He says that he used the English translation by Walter Kelly ("The History of France," by M. Michelet, translated by W. K. Kelly, 2 vols., London, 1844-46; vol. ii (1846), pages 515-586). American readers may find more convenient the translation by G. H. Smith.

In spite of his pretence of research and his hazardous corrections of Michelet, it is fairly evident that De Quincey knew no other source. He used it, after his habit, as a point of departure, a series of suggestions to his imagination (see page xxx). \* Research, in our current sense of to-day, he never

practiced. As history, his essay has no value; as literature, it is examined above and in the notes.

The following table refers his paragraphs (indicated by Roman numerals) to the corresponding pages in the fifth volume of Michelet (indicated by Arabic numerals):—

i-iv — 90, 92, 93 (merely the idea that Joan foresaw her suffering); v-vii — 43-45; xi — 46, 48, 42; xiv — 45; xvii — 58, 81; xx — 63, 90; xxi — 87, 88, 86, 102, 111; xxii — 92, 66, 78, 63, 82, 90; xxiii — 104-106, 114, 116, 117, 131, 126; xxiv — 129, 130, 136, 137; xxvii — 157 (foot-note — 147); xxviii — 144, 159, 161 (foot-notes — 147 for 1 and 4; 146 for 2; 55 for 3); xxix — 163, 161.

De Quincey's handling of history is further analyzed in Baldwin's Edition of "The Revolt of the Tartars," pages 90-96 (Longmans' English Classics). Compare the eloquent passage on history at page 6 of the "Joan of Arc" and the definition of a scholar at page 27.

The subject-matter proper of "The English Mail-Coach" of course requires no general comment; but its background of history should be filled in, as is suggested above, by reports on the historical significance of the Napoleonic wars. Instead of memorizing the dates of Salamanca and Vittoria, the student should place them as parts of a great European movement. To get a just view, however brief, of the principal movements and their objects is the more important because De Quincey's suggestions of the great history behind the small are those of an intensely British partisan. Some students will like to be reminded that the same campaigns lie behind Thackeray's "Vanity Fair."

## 2. *The Method.*

But history must not take too much time. This is the study of literature. Once a proper comprehension of subject-matter is assured, the main consideration is De Quincey's literary method. In this study the headings of the introduc-

tory essay (pages xxv-xxxvi) may be used in the note-books to keep the students' notes in groups. The practice should not, of course, become mechanical; but it is a natural means of securing definiteness where there is an easy lapse into vagueness. De Quincey, moreover, being not only an essayist and something of a rhetorician, but also very conscious of his own literary processes, lends himself peculiarly well to the analysis of prose form. The study of his essays is properly, almost necessarily, a study of rhetoric. For further analysis see Minto's "Manual of English Prose Literature," part i, chapter i; an essay on De Quincey's "impassioned prose" by Professor Masson ("Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Other Essays," page 257); and Baldwin's "College Manual of Rhetoric," fourth edition, pages 226-228.

### 3. *The Man.*

The last consideration is De Quincey's life — last because any author should be permitted to reveal himself primarily and mainly through his work, but also because the many stories about De Quincey have an interest which, though fascinating, is largely extraneous and often distracting. Our estimate of De Quincey must be based, not on other people's reports of his personal idiosyncrasies, nor even on the praises of his conversation, but on his published works. These, though we may judge them with some corrections by knowing the little that can really be known of his biography, must, after all, be judged for and by themselves. Fortunately, however, among the published works, are his famous "Confessions" and also his "Autobiographic Sketches." Whatever time can be spared for biography, beyond the sketch provided in this edition, may well be spent on these.

For the teacher's preparation, the briefest, most orderly, most convenient biography is that by Leslie Stephen in the "Dictionary of National Biography." Professor Masson's biography in the English Men of Letters Series contains

a compact body of valuable criticism. The "Life of De Quincey" by H. A. Page (2 vols., New York, 1877) contains many interesting letters, but is ill put together. Mr. Page, this time under his proper name, Dr. Alexander H. Japp, has collected two more volumes of letters and comment under the title "De Quincey Memorials" (United States Book Co., 1891). The collection corrects one's impressions of De Quincey in minor details, but hardly adds anything to the total estimate. Mr. James Hogg has collected in one volume the most interesting published reminiscences of De Quincey, and has added some equally interesting reminiscences of his own ("De Quincey and his Friends"; London, 1895). This collection relates mainly to the Edinburgh period. It contains, among less important matter, Woodhouse's notes of conversations with De Quincey, John Hill Burton's chapter entitled "Papaverius" in "The Book Hunter," and the recollections of Findlay, Colin Rae-Brown, Jacox, and James Payn. Dr. Shadworth Hodgson's "The Genius of De Quincey" is also reprinted from "Outcast Essays."

There are two standard collective editions: the "Riverside Edition" (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1877, 12 vols.), and Professor Masson's new and enlarged Edinburgh edition (A. and C. Black, 1889-90, 14 vols.). The latter is the lineal descendant of De Quincey's own collection for Hogg (1853-60), which was taken over by the Blacks in 1862; the former, an improved reissue of the American collection (Ticknor & Fields, 1851-1859).

Of selections, the best is Professor Turk's volume in the Athenæum Press Series (Boston, Ginn & Company, 1902; 400 pages of text, including the two essays reprinted here; 100 pages of notes). The introductory critical essay of fifty pages is the most complete, consistent, and just estimate of De Quincey's place in literature. Some of the notes in this edition, and some in Professor J. M. Hart's edition of "Joan of Arc" and "The English Mail-Coach" ("English Readings,"

New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1893) are referred to below by the names of the editors.

#### 4. *Themes.*

Among such brief reports as are suggested above for historical background may be others on De Quincey's life. Where the biographical material is assigned at all for themes, it is better assigned in some such fashion than in a block as a single biographical sketch. The latter assignment pretty surely elicits a mere digest. Special topics, on the other hand, such as De Quincey's Conversation, De Quincey's Reading, etc., open some opportunity for original composition.

Critical studies, always on specific topics, are in the case of De Quincey quite available. Such are De Quincey's Impassioned Prose, Its Aims and Its Methods; A Comparison of De Quincey's Essay Method with Macaulay's; The Opening of Paragraph XXIX (page 73) as a Text of De Quincey's Method; De Quincey's Habit of Words, etc.

Another profitable field for themes is opened by the note to page 54 (*"modern . . . travelling cannot compare,"* etc.), De Quincey's View of Railroads; A Comparison of De Quincey's Description of Mail-Coach Travelling with — (e. g. Dickens's in chapter xxviii of *"Pickwick Papers"*); The *"Co-operation"* of Railroads *"to a National Result"* (pages 42, 50. De Quincey, of course, views only the mail service. This, though immeasurably greater to-day, is almost overshadowed by the transportation of commodities); Going Home for the Holidays (a description on the hint of paragraph III, or a comparison of the treatment of a similar topic by Dickens, Thackeray, or Irving, as to the descriptive details chosen by each); A Comparison of De Quincey's Mail-Coachman with Dickens's Mr. Weller; A Crowd Waiting for War News (or Election Returns; hints from paragraphs XIII, XXI, XXII); The Crossing of Two Great American Roads (hint from paragraph VI of the *"Joan of Arc"*); — such themes involve the

practical application of methods. This may, in some few cases where the material is at hand from other courses, be carried even further by calling for a brief imaginative realization of the story of Nathan Hale, André, Washington at Valley Forge, Lady Jane Grey, Montcalm at Quebec, Marquette, etc. De Quincey should be used as a model except in (1) accuracy, and (2) order.

A few advanced students may be called on to tabulate De Quincey's incidental arguments; e. g., as to the detection of the dauphin (17), the speed of mail-coaches (54), Joan's military skill (20-21), the capacity of women (27), the analogy of theatres (45). Topics for review and examination are furnished by the Introduction and the Notes.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

(Compiled from "Lowndes's Bibliographer's Manual," The Dictionary of National Biography, Ryland's "Chronological Outlines of English Literature," and Whitcomb's "Chronological Outlines of American Literature.")

LIFE OF DE QUINCEY.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.
1785. De Quincey born.	1788. Byron born.	1788. United States Constitution ratified by eleven States.
	1790. Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France.	1789. Washington President. Opening of the French Revolution.
	1792. Shelley born.	
	1795. Carlyle and Keats born.	1793. Whitney invented the cotton-gin.
1796. Bath Grammar School.	1798. Wordsworth and Coleridge, Lyrical Ballads.	1797. John Adams President.
1800. Winkfield School. Visit to Ireland with Lord Westport, and to Lady Carbery at Laxton.	1800. Macaulay born.	1800. Union of Great Britain and Ireland.
1801. Manchester Grammar School.		1801. Jefferson President.
1802. Escape from school. Wanderings in Wales and London.		
1803. Oxford: Worcester College.	1805. Scott, Lay of the Last Minstrel.	1803. Louisiana Purchase.
	1806. Coleridge, Christabel.	1804. Napoleon Emperor.
1807. Meeting with Coleridge and Wordsworth.		
1808. London, brief law studies.		
1809. Grasmere.	1810. Scott, The Lady of the Lake.	1809. Madison President.
	1812. Byron, Childe Harold (i. and ii.).	1812-14. War between England and the United States.
	1814. Scott, Waverley.	

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.— *Continued.*

LIFE OF DE QUINCEY.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.
	1815. Wordsworth, <i>The White Doe of Rylstone</i> .	1815. Battle of Waterloo. Stevenson's first locomotive.
1816. Married Margaret Simpson.	1816. Shelley, <i>Alastor</i> .	
1819. Studies in political economy. Editor of the <i>Westmoreland Gazette</i> .	1819. Byron, <i>Don Juan</i> (i. and ii.). Irving,† <i>The Sketch-Book</i> .	1819. Purchase of Florida. Steamers began to cross the Atlantic.
	1820. Keats, <i>Lamia</i> , and other poems. Scott, <i>Ivanhoe</i> . Shelley, <i>Prometheus Unbound</i> .	
1821. London. <i>Confessions of an English Opium-Eater</i> * and translations from Richter in <i>The London Magazine</i> . Other articles (1822-1824).		1821. War of Grecian independence.
	1822. Lamb, <i>Essays of Elia</i> . 1824. Landor, <i>Imaginary Conversations</i> (i.). 1825. Macaulay, <i>Essay on Milton</i> .	1825. J. Q. Adams President.
1827. <i>Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts</i> (in <i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i> ).	1827. Alfred and Charles Tennyson, <i>Poems</i> .	
1828-33. Edinburgh. Articles in <i>Blackwood</i> .	1828. Irving,† <i>Columbus</i> .	
	1830. Tennyson, <i>Poems</i> , Chiefly Lyrical.	1830. William IV. King of England.

\* The titles of De Quincey's works are indicated by italics.

† American authors are thus indicated.



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—*Continued.*

LIFE OF DE QUINCEY.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.
1832. <i>Klosterheim</i> (a novel).	1831. Poe,† Poems. Whit- tier,† Legends of New England.	1832. English Reform Bill passed.
1834-40. Autobiographic sketches in Tait's Edinburgh Maga- zine.	1833. Carlyle, Sartor Resar- tus. Browning, Pauline.	1833. Abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire.
1837. Mrs. De Quincey died. <i>Shakspeare, Pope</i> (in Encyclopædia Bri- tannica). FLIGHT OF A TARTAR TRIBE (in Blackwood).	1836. Dickens, <i>Pickwick</i> . Holmes,† Poems.	1837. Van Buren Presi- dent. Victoria Queen of Eng- land.
1840. Cottage (Mavis Bush) at Lasswade.	1837. Carlyle, <i>The French Revolution</i> . Pres- cott,† Ferdinand and Isabella. Haw- thorne,† <i>Twice-Told Tales</i> .	
1840-46. Articles in Black- wood: <i>The Essenes</i> , <i>Style and Rhetoric</i> , <i>Homer and the Ho- merids</i> , <i>Berkeley and Idealism</i> , <i>Ci- cero</i> , <i>Benjamin of Tudela</i> , <i>The Logic of Political Econo- my</i> , <i>Suspensa de Profundis</i> .	1840. Poe,† <i>Tales of the Grotesque and Ara- besque</i> .	
1841-43. Glasgow, long vis- its at the houses of Professor Lushing- ton and Professor Nichol.	1841. Browning, <i>Pippa Passes</i> . Carlyle, <i>He- roes and Hero-Wor- ship</i> . Emerson,† Essays.	1841. Harrison President. Tyler President.
	1843. Macaulay, <i>Essays</i> . Ruskin, <i>Modern Painters</i> (i.).	
	1845. Carlyle, <i>Cromwell</i> . Poe,† <i>The Raven</i> and Other Poems.	1844. Morse telegraph. 1845. Polk President.
1847. Glasgow again, in lodgings, to assist in establishing the new North British Daily Mail and the trans- ferred Tait's Maga- zine. <i>The Spanish Military Nun, Joan of Arc</i> .	1845-48. War between the United States and Mexico.	
	1847. Charlotte Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i> . Tennyson, <i>The Princess</i> . Thackeray, <i>Vanity Fair</i> . Longfellow,† <i>Evangeline</i> .	

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—*Concluded.*

LIFE OF DE QUINCEY.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.
1848-59. Edinburgh, most of the time in lodgings.	1848. Macaulay, History of England (i. and ii.). Lowell,† A Fable for Critics.	1848. Second French Republic. Gold discovered in California.
1849. <i>The English Mail Coach.</i>	1850. Tennyson, In Memoriam. Hawthorne,† The Scarlet Letter.	1849. Taylor President. 1850. Fillmore President.
1851-52 American collective edition of De Quincy's works (J. T. Fields).		1852. Napoleon III. Emperor.
1853. English collective edition (James Hogg) begun.	1854. Thoreau,† Walden. 1856. Motley,† The Rise of the Dutch Republic.	1853. Pierce President.  1854. Crimean War.
1859. Death, December 8th.	1858. Tennyson, Idylls of the King. 1859. George Eliot, Adam Bede. George Meredith, Richard Feverel.	1859. Darwin published The Origin of Species. John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry.

# JOAN OF ARC



## JOAN OF ARC<sup>1</sup>

I. WHAT is to be thought of *her*? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that — like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judea — rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act*, by a victorious *act*, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. ¶ Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender; but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good will*, both were found true

<sup>1</sup> “*Arc*”:—Modern France, that should know a great deal better than myself, insists that the name is not D’Arc—*i.e.*, of Arc—but *Darc*. Now it happens sometimes, that if a person whose position guarantees his access to the best information, will content himself with gloomy dogmatism, striking the table with his fist, and saying in a terrific voice, “It *is* so, and there’s an end of it,” one bows deferentially, and submits. But if, unhappily for himself, won by this docility, he relents too amiably into reasons and arguments, probably one raises an insurrection against him that may never be crushed; for in the fields of logic one can skirmish, perhaps, as well as he. Had he confined himself to dogmatism, he would have intrenched his position in darkness, and have hidden his own vulnerable points. But, coming down to base reasons, he lets in light, and one sees where to plant the blows. Now, the worshipful reason of modern France for disturbing the old received spelling, is—that Jean Hordal, a descendant of *La Pucelle’s* brother, spelled the name *Darc* in 1612. But what of that? It is notorious that what small matter of spelling Providence had thought fit to disburse amongst man in the seventeenth century was all monopolised by printers; now, M. Hordal was *not* a printer.

and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose to a splendour and a noontday prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a by-word amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah. The poor, forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her native Domrémy as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent; no! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice, this was amongst the strongest pledges for *thy* truth, that never once — no, not for a moment of weakness — didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honour from man. Coronets for thee! Oh no! Honours, if they come when all is over, are for those that share thy blood.<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Domrémy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead. Call her, King of France, but she will not hear thee! Cite her by thy apparitors to come and receive a robe of honour, but she will be found *en contumace*. When the thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen, shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd girl that gave up all for her country, thy ear, young shepherd girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; that was thy destiny; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself. Life, thou saidst, is short; and the sleep which is in the grave is long! Let me use that life, so transitory, for the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long. This pure creature — pure from every suspicion of even a visionary self-interest, even as she was pure in senses more obvious —

<sup>1</sup> “*Those that share thy blood*”: — A collateral relative of Joanna’s was subsequently ennobled by the title of *Du Lys*.

never once did this holy child, as regarded herself, relax from her belief in the darkness that was travelling to meet her. She might not prefigure the very manner of her death ; she saw not in vision, perhaps, the ærial altitude of the fiery scaffold, the spectators without end on every road pouring into Rouen as to a coronation, the surging smoke, the volleying flames, the hostile faces all around, the pitying eye that lurked but here and there, until nature and imperishable truth broke loose from artificial restraints ; — these might not be apparent through the mists of the hurrying future. But the voice that called her to death, *that* she heard for ever.

II. Great was the throne of France even in those days, and great was he that sat upon it ; but well Joanna knew that not the throne, nor he that sat upon it, was for *her* ; but, on the contrary, that she was for *them* ; not she by them, but they by her, should rise from the dust. Gorgeous were the lilies of France, and for centuries had the privilege to spread their beauty over land and sea, until, in another century, the wrath of God and man combined to wither them ; but well Joanna knew, early at Domrémy she had read that bitter truth, that the lilies of France would decorate no garland for *her*. Flower nor bud, bell nor blossom, would ever bloom for *her* !

III. But stay. What reason is there for taking up this subject of Joanna precisely in the spring of 1847 ? Might it not have been left till the spring of 1947 ? or, perhaps, left till called for ? Yes, but it *is* called for ; and clamorously. You are aware, reader, that amongst the many original thinkers whom modern France has produced, one of the reputed leaders is M. Michelet. All these writers are of a revolutionary cast ; not in a political sense merely, but in all senses ; mad, oftentimes, as March hares ; crazy with the laughing gas of recovered liberty ; drunk with the wine-cup of their mighty revolution, snorting, whinnying, throwing up their heels, like wild horses in the boundless Pampas, and running races of defiance with snipes, or with the winds, or with their own shadows, if they can find nothing else to challenge. Some time or other

I, that have leisure to read, may introduce *you*, that have not, to two or three dozen of these writers ; of whom I can assure you beforehand that they are often profound, and at intervals are even as impassioned as if they were come of our best English blood. But now, confining our attention to M. Michelet, we in England — who know him best by his worst book, the book against priests, &c. — know him disadvantageously. That book is a rhapsody of incoherence. But his “History of France” is quite another thing. A man, in whatsoever craft he sails, cannot stretch away out of sight when he is linked to the windings of the shore by towing-ropes of history. Facts, and the consequences of facts, draw the writer back to the falconer’s lure from the giddiest heights of speculation. Here, therefore — in his “France” — if not always free from flightiness, if now and then off like a rocket for an airy wheel in the clouds, M. Michelet, with natural politeness, never forgets that he has left a large audience waiting for him on earth, and gazing upwards in anxiety for his return : return, therefore, he does. But history, though clear of certain temptations in one direction, has separate dangers of its own. It is impossible so to write a history of France, or of England — works becoming every hour more indispensable to the inevitably-political man of this day — without perilous openings for error. If I, for instance, on the part of England, should happen to turn my labours into that channel, and (on the model of Lord Percy going to Chevy Chase)

“A vow to God should make  
My pleasure in the Michelet woods  
Three summer days to take,”

probably, from simple delirium, I might hunt M. Michelet into *delirium tremens*. Two strong angels stand by the side of history, whether French history or English, as heraldic supporters : the angel of research on the left hand, that must read millions of dusty parchments, and of pages blotted with lies ; the angel of meditation on the right hand, that must cleanse these lying records with fire, even as of old the draperies of *asbestos*



were cleansed, and must quicken them into regenerated life. Willingly I acknowledge that no man will ever avoid innumerable errors of detail ; with so vast a compass of ground to traverse, this is impossible ; but such errors (though I have a bushel on hand, at M. Michelet's service) are not the game I chase ; it is the bitter and unfair spirit in which M. Michelet writes against England. Even *that*, after all, is but my secondary object ; the real one is Joanna, the Pucelle d'Orléans for herself.

IV. I am not going to write the history of *La Pucelle* : to do this, or even circumstantially to report the history of her persecution and bitter death, of her struggle with false witnesses and with ensnaring judges, it would be necessary to have before us *all* the documents, and therefore the collection only now forthcoming<sup>1</sup> in Paris. But *my* purpose is narrower. There have been great thinkers, disdaining the careless judgments of contemporaries, who have thrown themselves boldly on the judgment of a far posterity, that should have had time to review, to ponder, to compare. There have been great actors on the stage of tragic humanity that might, with the same depth of confidence, have appealed from the levity of compatriot friends — too heartless for the sublime interest of their story, and too impatient for the labour of sifting its perplexities — to the magnanimity and justice of enemies. To this class belongs the Maid of Arc. The ancient Romans were too faithful to the ideal of grandeur in themselves not to relent, after a generation or two, before the grandeur of Hannibal. Mithridates — a more doubtful person — yet, merely for the magic perseverance of his indomitable malice, won from the same Romans the only real honour that ever he received on earth. And we English have ever shown the same homage to stubborn enmity. To work unflinchingly for the ruin of England ; to say through life, by word and by deed, *Delenda est Anglia Victrix !* that one purpose of malice, faith-

<sup>1</sup> “ *Only now forthcoming* ” : — In 1847 *began* the publication (from official records) of Joanna's trial. It was interrupted, I fear, by the convulsions of 1848 ; and whether even yet finished, I do not know.

fully pursued, has quartered some people upon our national funds of homage as by a perpetual annuity. Better than an inheritance of service rendered to England herself, has sometimes proved the most insane hatred to England. Hyder Ali, even his son Tippoo, though so far inferior, and Napoleon, have all benefited by this disposition amongst ourselves to exaggerate the merit of diabolic enmity. Not one of these men was ever capable, in a solitary instance, of praising an enemy (what do you say to *that*, reader?), and yet, in *their* behalf, we consent to forget, not their crimes only, but (which is worse) their hideous bigotry and anti-magnanimous egotism — for nationality it was not. Suffren, and some half dozen of other French nautical heroes, because rightly they did us all the mischief they could (which was really great), are names justly revered in England. On the same principle, *La Pucelle d'Orléans*, the victorious enemy of England, has been destined to receive her deepest commemoration from the magnanimous justice of Englishmen.

V. Joanna, as we in England should call her, but, according to her own statement, Jeanne (or, as M. Michelet asserts, Jean)<sup>1</sup> D'Arc, was born at Domrémy, a village on the marches of Lorraine and Champagne, and dependent upon the town of Vaucouleurs. I have called her a Lorrainer, not simply because the word is prettier, but because Champagne

<sup>1</sup> "*Jean*": — M. Michelet asserts that there was a mystical meaning at that era in calling a child *Jean*; it implied a secret commendation of a child, if not a dedication, to St. John the evangelist, the beloved disciple, the apostle of love and mysterious visions. But, really, as the name was so exceedingly common, few people will detect a mystery in calling a *boy* by the name of Jack, though it *does* seem mysterious to call a *girl* Jack. It may be less so in France, where a beautiful practice has always prevailed of giving a boy his mother's name — preceded and strengthened by a male name, as *Charles Anne*, *Victor Victoire*. In cases where a mother's memory has been unusually dear to a son, this vocal memento of her, locked into the circle of his own name, gives to it the tenderness of a testamentary relique, or a funeral ring. I presume, therefore, that *La Pucelle* must have borne the baptismal name of Jeanne Jean; the latter with no reference, perhaps, to so sublime a person as St. John, but simply to some relative.

too odiously reminds us English of what are for *us* imaginary wines, which, undoubtedly, *La Pucelle* tasted as rarely as we English; we English, because the Champagne of London is chiefly grown in Devonshire; *La Pucelle*, because the Champagne of Champagne never, by any chance, flowed into the fountain of Domrémy, from which only she drank. M. Michelet will have her to be a *Champenoise*, and for no better reason than that she "took after her father," who happened to be a *Champenois*.

VI. These disputes, however, turn on refinements too nice. Domrémy stood upon the frontiers, and, like other frontiers, produced a *mixed* race, representing the *cis* and the *trans*. A river (it is true) formed the boundary-line at this point — the river Meuse; and *that*, in old days, might have divided the populations; but in these days it did not: there were bridges, there were ferries, and weddings crossed from the right bank to the left. Here lay two great roads, not so much for travellers that were few, as for armies that were too many by half. These two roads, one of which was the great highroad between France and Germany, *decussated* at this very point; which is a learned way of saying that they formed a St. Andrew's Cross, or letter **X**. I hope the compositor will choose a good large **X**, in which case the point of intersection, the *locus* of conflux and intersection for these four diverging arms, will finish the reader's geographical education, by showing him to a hair's-breadth where it was that Domrémy stood. These roads, so grandly situated, as great trunk arteries between two mighty realms,<sup>1</sup> and haunted for ever by wars or rumours of wars, *decussated* (for anything I know to the contrary) absolutely under Joanna's bedroom window; one rolling away to the right, past Monsieur D'Arc's old barn, and the other unaccountably preferring to sweep round that odious man's pig-sty to the left.

VII. On whichever side of the border chance had thrown

<sup>1</sup> And reminding one of that inscription, so justly admired by Paul Richter, which a Russian Czarina placed on a guide-post near Moscow, *This is the road that leads to Constantinople.*

Joanna, the same love to France would have been nurtured. For it is a strange fact, noticed by M. Michelet and others, that the Dukes of Bar and Lorraine had for generations pursued the policy of eternal warfare with France on their own account, yet also of eternal amity and league with France in case anybody else presumed to attack her. Let peace settle upon France, and before long you might rely upon seeing the little vixen Lorraine flying at the throat of France. Let France be assailed by a formidable enemy, and instantly you saw a Duke of Lorraine insisting on having his own throat cut in support of France ; which favour accordingly was cheerfully granted to him in three great successive battles — twice by the English, viz., at Crécy and Agincourt, once by the Sultan at Nicopolis.

VIII. This sympathy with France during great eclipses, in those that during ordinary seasons were always teasing her with brawls and guerilla inroads, strengthened the natural piety to France of those that were confessedly the children of her own house. The outposts of France, as one may call the great frontier provinces, were of all localities the most devoted to the *Fleurs de Lys*. To witness, at any great crisis, the generous devotion to these lilies of the little fiery cousin that in gentler weather was for ever tilting at the breast of France, could not but fan the zeal of France's legitimate daughters ; whilst to occupy a post of honour on the frontiers against an old hereditary enemy of France, would naturally stimulate this zeal by a sentiment of martial pride, by a sense of danger always threatening, and of hatred always smouldering. That great four-headed road was a perpetual memento to patriotic ardour. To say, this way lies the road to Paris, and that other way to Aix-la-Chapelle — this to Prague, that to Vienna — nourished the warfare of the heart by daily ministrations of sense. The eye that watched for the gleams of lance or helmet from the hostile frontier, the ear that listened for the groaning of wheels, made the highroad itself, with its relations to centres so remote, into a manual of patriotic duty.

IX. The situation, therefore, *locally*, of Joanna was full of profound suggestions to a heart that listened for the stealthy steps of change and fear that too surely were in motion. But, if the place were grand, the time, the burden of the time, was far more so. The air overhead in its upper chambers was *hurtling* with the obscure sound ; was dark with sullen fermenting of storms that had been gathering for a hundred and thirty years. The battle of Agincourt in Joanna's childhood had reopened the wounds of France. Crécy and Poitiers, those withering overthrows for the chivalry of France, had, before Agincourt occurred, been tranquillised by more than half a century ; but this resurrection of their trumpet wails made the whole series of battles and endless skirmishes take their stations as parts in one drama. The graves that had closed sixty years ago seemed to fly open in sympathy with a sorrow that echoed their own. The monarchy of France laboured in extremity, rocked and reeled like a ship fighting with the darkness of monsoons. The madness of the poor king (Charles VI.) falling in at such a crisis, like the case of women labouring in childbirth during the storming of a city, trebled the awfulness of the time. Even the wild story of the incident which had immediately occasioned the explosion of this madness — the case of a man unknown, gloomy, and perhaps maniacal himself, coming out of a forest at noon-day, laying his hand upon the bridle of the king's horse, checking him for a moment to say, "Oh, king, thou art betrayed," and then vanishing, no man knew whither, as he had appeared for no man knew what — fell in with the universal prostration of mind that laid France on her knees, as before the slow unweaving of some ancient prophetic doom. The famines, the extraordinary diseases, the insurrections of the peasantry up and down Europe — these were chords struck from the same mysterious harp ; but these were transitory chords. There had been others of deeper and more ominous sound. The termination of the Crusades, the destruction of the Templars, the Papal interdicts, the tragedies caused or suffered by the house of Anjou, and by the emperor — these

were full of a more permanent significance. But, since then, the colossal figure of feudalism was seen standing, as it were on tiptoe, at Crécy, for flight from earth : that was a revolution unparalleled ; yet *that* was a trifle by comparison with the more fearful revolutions that were mining below the church. By her own internal schisms, by the abominable spectacle of a double pope — so that no man, except through political bias, could even guess which was Heaven's vicegerent, and which the creature of hell — the church was rehearsing, as in still earlier forms she had already rehearsed, those vast rents in her foundations which no man should ever heal.

X. These were the loftiest peaks of the cloudland in the skies that to the scientific gazer first caught the colours of the *new* morning in advance. But the whole vast range alike of sweeping glooms overhead, dwelt upon all meditative minds, even upon those that could not distinguish the tendencies nor decipher the forms. It was, therefore, not her own age alone, as affected by its immediate calamities, that lay with such weight upon Joanna's mind ; but her own age, as one section in a vast mysterious drama, unweaving through a century back, and drawing nearer continually to some dreadful crisis. Cataracts and rapids were heard roaring ahead ; and signs were seen far back, by help of old men's memories, which answered secretly to signs now coming forward on the eye, even as locks answer to keys. It was not wonderful that in such a haunted solitude, with such a haunted heart, Joanna should see angelic visions, and hear angelic voices. These voices whispered to her for ever the duty, self-imposed, of delivering France. Five years she listened to these monitory voices with internal struggles. At length she could resist no longer. Doubt gave way ; and she left her home for ever in order to present herself at the dauphin's court.

XI. The education of this poor girl was mean according to the present standard : was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard : and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. She read nothing, for she could not read ; but she had heard others read parts of the

Roman martyrology. She wept in sympathy with the sad *Misereres* of the Romish Church; she rose to heaven with the glad triumphant *Te Deums* of Rome: she drew her comfort and her vital strength from the rites of the same church. But, next after these spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advantages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies that the parish priest (*curé*) was obliged to read mass there once a-year, in order to keep them in any decent bounds. Fairies are important, even in a statistical view: certain weeds mark poverty in the soil, fairies mark its solitude. As surely as the wolf retires before cities, does the fairy sequester herself from the haunts of the licensed victualler. A village is too much for her nervous delicacy: at most, she can tolerate a distant view of a hamlet. We may judge, therefore, by the uneasiness and extra trouble which they gave to the parson, in what strength the fairies mustered at Domrémy, and, by a satisfactory consequence, how thinly sown with men and women must have been that region even in its inhabited spots. But the forests of Domrémy — those were the glories of the land: for in them abode mysterious powers and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. “Abbeys there were, and abbey windows” — “like Moorish temples of the Hindoos,” that exercised even princely power both in Lorraine and in the German Diets. These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins or vespers, and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys, so as in no degree to disturb the deep solitude of the region; yet many enough to spread a network or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness. This sort of religious talisman being secured, a man the most afraid of ghosts (like myself, suppose, or the reader) becomes armed into courage to wander for days in their sylvan recesses. The mountains of the Vosges, on the eastern frontier of France, have never attracted much notice from Europe, except in 1813–14 for a few brief

months, when they fell within Napoleon's line of defence against the Allies. But they are interesting for this, amongst other features, that they do not, like some loftier ranges, repel woods : the forests and the hills are on sociable terms. *Live and let live* is their motto. For this reason, in part, these tracts in Lorraine were a favourite hunting-ground with the Carlovingian princes. About six hundred years before Joanna's childhood, Charlemagne was known to have hunted there. That, of itself, was a grand incident in the traditions of a forest or a chase. In these vast forests, also, were to be found (if anywhere to be found) those mysterious fawns that tempted solitary hunters into visionary and perilous pursuits. Here was seen (if anywhere seen) that ancient stag who was already nine hundred years old, but possibly a hundred or two more, when met by Charlemagne ; and the thing was put beyond doubt by the inscription upon his golden collar. I believe Charlemagne knighted the stag : and, if ever he is met again by a king, he ought to be made an earl : or, being upon the marches of France, a marquis. Observe, I don't absolutely vouch for all these things : my own opinion varies. On a fine breezy forenoon I am audaciously sceptical ; but as twilight sets in, my credulity grows steadily, till it becomes equal to anything that could be desired. And I have heard candid sportsmen declare that, outside of these very forests, they laughed loudly at all the dim tales connected with their haunted solitudes ; but, on reaching a spot notoriously eighteen miles deep within them, they agreed with Sir Roger de Coverley, that a good deal might be said on both sides.

XII. Such traditions, or any others that (like the stag) connect distant generations with each other, are, for that cause, sublime ; and the sense of the shadowy, connected with such appearances that reveal themselves or not, according to circumstances, leaves a colouring of sanctity over ancient forests, even in those minds that utterly reject the legend as a fact.

XIII. But, apart from all distinct stories of that order, in any solitary frontier between two great empires, as here, for instance, or in the desert between Syria and the Euphrates,



there is an inevitable tendency, in minds of any deep sensibility, to people the solitudes with phantom images of powers that were of old so vast. Joanna, therefore, in her quiet occupation of a shepherdess, would be led continually to brood over the political condition of her country, by the traditions of the past no less than by the mementos of the local present.

XIV. M. Michelet, indeed, says that La Pucelle was *not* a shepherdess. I beg his pardon: she *was*. What he rests upon I guess pretty well: it is the evidence of a woman called Haumette, the most confidential friend of Joanna. Now, she is a good witness, and a good girl, and I like her; for she makes a natural and affectionate report of Joanna's ordinary life. But still, however good she may be as a witness, Joanna is better; and she, when speaking to the dauphin, calls herself in the Latin report *Bergereta*. Even Haumette confesses that Joanna tended sheep in her girlhood. And I believe, that if Miss Haumette were taking coffee alone with me this very evening (February 12, 1847)—in which there would be no subject for scandal or for maiden blushes, because I am an intense philosopher, and Miss H. would be hard upon four hundred and fifty years old—she would admit the following comment upon her evidence to be right. A Frenchman, about forty years ago, M. Simond, in his "Travels," mentions incidentally the following hideous scene as one steadily observed and watched by himself in chivalrous France, not very long before the French Revolution:—A peasant was ploughing; and the team that drew his plough was a donkey and a woman. Both were regularly harnessed: both pulled alike. This is bad enough; but the Frenchman adds, that, in distributing his lashes, the peasant was obviously desirous of being impartial: or, if either of the yoke-fellows had a right to complain, certainly it was not the donkey. Now, in any country where such degradation of females could be tolerated by the state of manners, a woman of delicacy would shrink from acknowledging, either for herself or her friend, that she had ever been addicted to any

mode of labour not strictly domestic ; because, if once owning herself a prædial servant, she would be sensible that this confession extended by probability in the hearer's thoughts to the having incurred indignities of this horrible kind. Haumette clearly thinks it more dignified for Joanna to have been darning the stockings of her horny-hoofed father, Monsieur D'Arc, than keeping sheep, lest she might then be suspected of having ever done something worse. But, luckily, there was no danger of *that* : Joanna never was in service ; and my opinion is, that her father should have mended his own stockings, since probably he was the party to make the holes in them, as many a better man than D'Arc does ; meaning by *that* not myself, because, though probably a better man than D'Arc, I protest against doing anything of the kind. If I lived even with Friday in Juan Fernandez, either Friday must do all the darning, or else it must go undone. The better men that I meant were the sailors in the British navy, every man of whom mends his own stockings. Who else is to do it ? Do you suppose, reader, that the junior lords of the admiralty are under articles to darn for the navy ?

XV. The reason, meantime, for my systematic hatred of D'Arc is this. There was a story current in France before the Revolution, framed to ridicule the pauper aristocracy, who happened to have long pedigrees and short rent rolls ; viz., that a head of such a house, dating from the Crusades, was overheard saying to his son, a Chevalier of St. Louis, "*Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger ?*" Now, it is clearly made out by the surviving evidence, that D'Arc would much have preferred continuing to say, "*Ma fille, as-tu donné au cochon à manger ?*" to saying, "*Pucelle d'Orléans, as-tu sauvé les fleurs-de-lys ?*" There is an old English copy of verses which argues thus :—

" If the man that turnips cries,  
Cry not when his father dies,  
Then 't is plain the man had rather  
Have a turnip than his father."

I cannot say that the logic of these verses was ever *entirely* to my satisfaction. I do not see my way through it as clearly as could be wished. But I see my way most clearly through D'Arc; and the result is—that he would greatly have preferred not merely a turnip to his father, but the saving a pound or so of bacon to saving the Oriflamme of France.

XVI. It is probable (as M. Michelet suggests) that the title of Virgin, or *Pucelle*, had in itself, and apart from the miraculous stories about her, a secret power over the rude soldiery and partisan chiefs of that period; for, in such a person, they saw a representative manifestation of the Virgin Mary, who, in a course of centuries, had grown steadily upon the popular heart.

XVII. As to Joanna's supernatural detection of the dauphin (Charles VII.) amongst three hundred lords and knights, I am surprised at the credulity which could ever lend itself to that theatrical juggle. Who admires more than myself the sublime enthusiasm, the rapturous faith in herself, of this pure creature? But I am far from admiring stage artifices, which not *La Pucelle*, but the court, must have arranged; nor can surrender myself to the conjurer's *legerdemain*, such as may be seen every day for a shilling. Southey's "Joan of Arc" was published in 1796. Twenty years after, talking with Southey, I was surprised to find him still owning a secret bias in favour of Joan, founded on her detection of the dauphin. The story, for the benefit of the reader new to the case, was this:—*La Pucelle* was first made known to the dauphin, and presented to his court, at Chinon: and here came her first trial. By way of testing her supernatural pretensions, she was to find out the royal personage amongst the whole ark of clean and unclean creatures. Failing in this *coup d'essai*, she would not simply disappoint many a beating heart in the glittering crowd that on different motives yearned for her success, but she would ruin herself—and, as the oracle within had told her, would, by ruining herself, ruin France. Our own sovereign lady Victoria rehearses annually a trial not so severe in degree, but the same in kind. She "pricks" for

sheriffs. Joanna pricked for a king. But observe the difference : our own lady pricks for two men out of three ; Joanna for one man out of three hundred. Happy Lady of the Islands and the orient ! — she *can* go astray in her choice only by one half : to the extent of one half she *must* have the satisfaction of being right. And yet, even with these tight limits to the misery of a boundless discretion, permit me, liege Lady, with all loyalty, to submit — that now and then you prick with your pin the wrong man. But the poor child from Domrémy, shrinking under the gaze of a dazzling court — not *because* dazzling (for in visions she had seen those that were more so), but because some of them wore a scoffing smile on their features — how should *she* throw her line into so deep a river to angle for a king, where many a gay creature was sporting that masqueraded as kings in dress ! Nay, even more than any true king would have done : for, in Southey's version of the story, the dauphin says, by way of trying the virgin's magnetic sympathy with royalty,

“ On the throne,  
I the while mingling with the menial throng,  
Some courtier shall be seated.”

This usurper is even crowned : “ the jewelled crown shines on a menial's head.” But really, that is “ *un peu fort* ” ; and the mob of spectators might raise a scruple whether our friend the jackdaw upon the throne, and the dauphin himself, were not grazing the shins of treason. For the dauphin could not lend more than belonged to him. According to the popular notion, he had no crown for himself ; consequently none to lend, on any pretence whatever, until the consecrated Maid should take him to Rheims. This was the *popular* notion in France. But certainly it was the dauphin's interest to support the popular notion, as he meant to use the services of Joanna. For, if he were king already, what was it that she could do for him beyond Orléans ? That is to say, what more than a merely *military* service could she render him ? And, above all, if he were king without a coronation,

and without the oil from the sacred ampulla, what advantage was yet open to him by celerity above his competitor, the English boy? Now was to be a race for a coronation: he that should win *that* race carried the superstition of France along with him: he that should first be drawn from the ovens of Rheims, was under that superstition baked into a king.

XVIII. La Pucelle, before she could be allowed to practise as a warrior, was put through her manual and platoon exercise, as a pupil in divinity, at the bar of six eminent men in wigs. According to Southey (v. 393, Book III., in the original edition of his "Joan of Arc"), she "appalled the doctors." It's not easy to do *that*: but they had some reason to feel bothered, as that surgeon would assuredly feel bothered, who, upon proceeding to dissect a subject, should find the subject retaliating as a dissector upon himself, especially if Joanna ever made the speech to them which occupies v. 354-391, B. III. It is a double impossibility: 1st, because a piracy from Tindal's "Christianity as old as the Creation"—a piracy *a parte ante*, and by three centuries; 2dly, it is quite contrary to the evidence on Joanna's trial. Southey's "Joan" of A. D. 1796 (Cottle, Bristol) tells the doctors, amongst other secrets, that she never in her life attended—1st, Mass; nor 2d, the Sacramental table; nor 3d, Confession. In the meantime, all this deistical confession of Joanna's, besides being suicidal for the interest of her cause, is opposed to the depositions upon *both* trials. The very best witness called from first to last deposes that Joanna attended these rites of her church even too often; was taxed with doing so; and, by blushing, owned the charge as a fact, though certainly not as a fault. Joanna was a girl of natural piety, that saw God in forests, and hills, and fountains; but did not the less seek him in chapels and consecrated oratories.

XIX. This peasant girl was self-educated through her own natural meditateness. If the reader turns to that divine passage in "Paradise Regained," which Milton has put into the mouth of our Saviour when first entering the wilderness,

and musing upon the tendency of those great impulses growing within himself ——

“ Oh, what a multitude of thoughts at once  
Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider  
What from within I feel myself, and hear  
What from without comes often to my ears,  
Ill sorting with my present state compared !  
When I was yet a child, no childish play  
To me was pleasing ; all my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do  
What might be public good ; myself I thought  
Born to that end ” ——

he will have some notion of the vast reveries which brooded over the heart of Joanna in early girlhood, when the wings were budding that should carry her from Orléans to Rheims ; when the golden chariot was dimly revealing itself that should carry her from the kingdom of *France Delivered* to the eternal kingdom.

XX. It is not requisite for the honour of Joanna, nor is there, in this place, room, to pursue her brief career of *action*. That, though wonderful, forms the earthly part of her story : the spiritual part is the saintly passion of her imprisonment, trial, and execution. It is unfortunate, therefore, for Southey's “ Joan of Arc ” (which, however, should always be regarded as a *juvenile* effort), that, precisely when her real glory begins, the poem ends. But this limitation of the interest grew, no doubt, from the constraint inseparably attached to the law of epic unity. Joanna's history bisects into two opposite hemispheres, and both could not have been presented to the eye in one poem, unless by sacrificing all unity of theme, or else by involving the earlier half, as a narrative episode, in the latter ; which, however, might have been done, for it might have been communicated to a fellow-prisoner, or a confessor, by Joanna herself. It is sufficient, as concerns *this* section of Joanna's life, to say that she fulfilled, to the height of her promises, the restoration of the prostrate throne. France had become a province of England ; and for the ruin

of both, if such a yoke could be maintained. Dreadful pecuniary exhaustion caused the English energy to droop ; and that critical opening *La Pucelle* used with a corresponding felicity of audacity and suddenness (that were in themselves portentous) for introducing the wedge of French native resources, for rekindling the national pride, and for planting the dauphin once more upon his feet. When Joanna appeared, he had been on the point of giving up the struggle with the English, distressed as they were, and of flying to the south of France. She taught him to blush for such abject counsels. She liberated Orléans, that great city, so decisive by its fate for the issue of the war, and then beleaguered by the English with an elaborate application of engineering skill unprecedented in Europe. Entering the city after sunset, on the 29th of April, she sang mass on Sunday, May 8, for the entire disappearance of the besieging force. On the 29th of June, she fought and gained over the English the decisive battle of Patay ; on the 9th of July, she took Troyes by a coup-de-main from a mixed garrison of English and Burgundians ; on the 15th of that month, she carried the dauphin into Rheims ; on Sunday the 17th, she crowned him ; and there she rested from her labour of triumph. All that was to be *done*, she had now accomplished : what remained was — to *suffer*.

XXI. All this forward movement was her own : excepting one man, the whole council was against her. Her enemies were all that drew power from earth. Her supporters were her own strong enthusiasm, and the headlong contagion by which she carried this sublime frenzy into the hearts of women, of soldiers, and of all who lived by labour. Hence-forwards she was thwarted ; and the worst error that she committed was to lend the sanction of her presence to counsels which she had ceased to approve. But she had now accomplished the capital objects which her own visions had dictated. These involved all the rest. Errors were now less important ; and doubtless it had now become more difficult for herself to pronounce authentically what *were* errors. The

noble girl had achieved, as by a rapture of motion, the capital end of clearing out a free space around her sovereign, giving him the power to move his arms with effect; and, secondly, the inappreciable end of winning for that sovereign what seemed to all France the heavenly ratification of his rights, by crowning him with the ancient solemnities. She had made it impossible for the English now to step before her. They were caught in an irretrievable blunder, owing partly to discord amongst the uncles of Henry VI., partly to a want of funds, but partly to the very impossibility which they believed to press with tenfold force upon any French attempt to forestall theirs. They laughed at such a thought; and whilst they laughed, she *did* it. Henceforth the single redress for the English of this capital oversight, but which never *could* have redressed it effectually, was to vitiate and taint the coronation of Charles VII. as the work of a witch. That policy, and not malice (as M. Michelet is so happy to believe), was the moving principle in the subsequent prosecution of Joanna. Unless they unhinged the force of the first coronation in the popular mind, by associating it with power given from hell, they felt that the sceptre of the invader was broken.

XXII. But she, the child that, at nineteen, had wrought wonders so great for France, was she not elated? Did she not lose, as men so often *have* lost, all sobriety of mind when standing upon the pinnacle of success so giddy? Let her enemies declare. During the progress of her movement, and in the centre of ferocious struggles, she had manifested the temper of her feelings by the pity which she had everywhere expressed for the suffering enemy. She forwarded to the English leaders a touching invitation to unite with the French, as brothers, in a common crusade against infidels, thus opening the road for a soldierly retreat. She interposed to protect the captive or the wounded — she mourned over the excesses of her countrymen — she threw herself off her horse to kneel by the dying English soldier, and to comfort him with such ministrations, physical or spiritual, as his situation allowed. “*Nolebat*,” says the evidence, “*uti ense*



suo, aut quemquam interficere." She sheltered the English, that invoked her aid, in her own quarters. She wept as she beheld, stretched on the field of battle, so many brave enemies that had died without confession. And, as regarded herself, her elation expressed itself thus : — On the day when she had finished her work, she wept ; for she knew that, when her *triumphal* task was done, her end must be approaching. Her aspirations pointed only to a place, which seemed to her more than usually full of natural piety, as one in which it would give her pleasure to die. And she uttered, between smiles and tears, as a wish that inexpressibly fascinated her heart, and yet was half fantastic, a broken prayer that God would return her to the solitudes from which he had drawn her, and suffer her to become a shepherdess once more. It was a natural prayer, because nature has laid a necessity upon every human heart to seek for rest, and to shrink from torment. Yet, again, it was a half-fantastic prayer, because, from childhood upwards, visions that she had no power to mistrust, and the voices which sounded in her ear for ever, had long since persuaded her mind, that for *her* no such prayer could be granted. Too well she felt that her mission must be worked out to the end, and that the end was now at hand. All went wrong from this time. She herself had created the *funds* out of which the French restoration should grow ; but she was not suffered to witness their development, or their prosperous application. More than one military plan was entered upon which she did not approve. But she still continued to expose her person as before. Severe wounds had not taught her caution. And at length, in a sortie from Compiègne (whether through treacherous collusion on the part of her own friends is doubtful to this day), she was made prisoner by the Burgundians, and finally surrendered to the English.

XXIII. Now came her trial. This trial, moving of course under English influence, was conducted in chief by the Bishop of Beauvais. He was a Frenchman, sold to English interests, and hoping, by favour of the English leaders, to reach the highest preferment. *Bishop that art, Archbishop that shalt be,*

*Cardinal that mayest be*, were the words that sounded continually in his ear; and doubtless a whisper of visions still higher, of a triple crown, and feet upon the necks of kings, sometimes stole into his heart. M. Michelet is anxious to keep us in mind that this bishop was but an agent of the English. True. But it does not better the case for his countryman — that, being an accomplice in the crime, making himself the leader in the persecution against the helpless girl, he was willing to be all this in the spirit, and with the conscious vileness of a cat's-paw. Never from the foundations of the earth was there such a trial as this, if it were laid open in all its beauty of defence, and all its hellishness of attack. Oh, child of France! shepherdess, peasant girl! trodden under foot by all around thee, how I honour thy flashing intellect, quick as God's lightning, and true as God's lightning to its mark, that ran before France and laggard Europe by many a century, confounding the malice of the ensnarer, and making dumb the oracles of falsehood! Is it not scandalous, is it not humiliating to civilisation, that, even at this day, France exhibits the horrid spectacle of judges examining the prisoner against himself; seducing him, by fraud, into treacherous conclusions against his own head; using the terrors of their power for extorting confessions from the frailty of hope; nay (which is worse), using the blandishments of condescension and snaky kindness for thawing into compliances of gratitude those whom they had failed to freeze into terror? Wicked judges! Barbarian jurisprudence! that, sitting in your own conceit on the summits of social wisdom, have yet failed to learn the first principles of criminal justice; sit ye humbly and with docility at the feet of this girl from Domrémy, that tore your webs of cruelty into shreds and dust. "Would you examine me as a witness against myself?" was the question by which many times she defied their arts. Continually she showed that their interrogations were irrelevant to any business before the court, or that entered into the ridiculous charges against her. General questions were proposed to her on points of casuistical divinity; two-edged questions, which

not one of themselves could have answered, without, on the one side, landing himself in heresy (as then interpreted), or, on the other, in some presumptuous expression of self-esteem. Next came a wretched Dominican, that pressed her with an objection, which, if applied to the Bible, would tax every one of its miracles with unsoundness. The monk had the excuse of never having read the Bible. M. Michelet has no such excuse ; and it makes one blush for him, as a philosopher, to find him describing such an argument as "weighty," whereas it is but a varied expression of rude Mahometan metaphysics. Her answer to this, if there were room to place the whole in a clear light, was as shattering as it was rapid. Another thought to entrap her by asking what language the angelic visitors of her solitude had talked ; as though heavenly counsels could want polyglot interpreters for every word, or that God needed language at all in whispering thoughts to a human heart. Then came a worse devil, who asked her whether the archangel Michael had appeared naked. Not comprehending the vile insinuation, Joanna, whose poverty suggested to her simplicity that it might be the *costliness* of suitable robes which caused the demur, asked them if they fancied God, who clothed the flowers of the valleys, unable to find raiment for his servants. The answer of Joanna moves a smile of tenderness, but the disappointment of her judges makes one laugh exultingly. Others succeeded by troops, who upbraided her with leaving her father ; as if that greater Father, whom she believed herself to have been serving, did not retain the power of dispensing with his own rules, or had not said, that for a less cause than martyrdom, man and woman should leave both father and mother.

XXIV. On Easter Sunday, when the trial had been long proceeding, the poor girl fell so ill as to cause a belief that she had been poisoned. It was not poison. Nobody had any interest in hastening a death so certain. M. Michelet, whose sympathies with all feelings are so quick, that one would gladly see them always as justly directed, reads the case most truly. Joanna had a twofold malady. She was visited

by a paroxysm of the complaint called *home-sickness* ; the cruel nature of her imprisonment, and its length, could not but point her solitary thoughts, in darkness and in chains (for chained she was), to Domrémy. And the season, which was the most heavenly period of the spring, added stings to this yearning. That was one of her maladies — *nostalgia*, as medicine calls it ; the other was weariness and exhaustion from daily combats with malice. She saw that everybody hated her, and thirsted for her blood ; nay, many kind-hearted creatures that would have pitied her profoundly, as regarded all political charges, had their natural feelings warped by the belief that she had dealings with fiendish powers. She knew she was to die ; that was *not* the misery : the misery was, that this consummation could not be reached without so much intermediate strife, as if she were contending for some chance (where chance was none) of happiness, or were dreaming for a moment of escaping the inevitable. Why, then, *did* she contend ? Knowing that she would reap nothing from answering her persecutors, why did she not retire by silence from the superfluous contest ? It was because her quick and eager loyalty to truth would not suffer her to see it darkened by frauds, which *she* could expose, but others, even of candid listeners, perhaps, could not ; it was through that imperishable grandeur of soul, which taught her to submit meekly and without a struggle to her punishment, but taught her *not* to submit — no, not for a moment — to calumny as to facts, or to misconstruction as to motives. Besides, there were secretaries all around the court taking down her words. That was meant for no good to *her*. But the end does not always correspond to the meaning. And Joanna might say to herself — these words that will be used against me to-morrow and the next day, perhaps, in some nobler generation may rise again for my justification. Yes, Joanna, they *are* rising even now in Paris, and for more than justification.

XXV. Woman, sister — there are some things which you do not execute as well as your brother, man ; no, nor ever will. Pardon me, if I doubt whether you will ever produce a great

poet from your choirs, or a Mozart, or a Phidias, or a Michael Angelo, or a great philosopher, or a great scholar. By which last is meant — not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the angel of the resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones, into the unity of breathing life. If you *can* create yourselves into any of these great creators, why have you not?

XXVI. Yet, sister woman, though I cannot consent to find a Mozart or a Michael Angelo in your sex, cheerfully, and with the love that burns in depths of admiration, I acknowledge that you can do one thing as well as the best of us men — a greater thing than even Milton is known to have done, or Michael Angelo — you can die grandly, and as goddesses would die, were goddesses mortal. If any distant worlds (which *may* be the case) are so far ahead of us Tellurians in optical resources, as to see distinctly through their telescopes all that we do on earth, what is the grandest sight to which we ever treat them? St. Peter's at Rome, do you fancy, on Easter Sunday, or Luxor, or perhaps the Himalayas? Oh no! my friend: suggest something better; these are baubles to *them*; they see in other worlds, in their own, far better toys of the same kind. These, take my word for it, are nothing. Do you give it up? The finest thing, then, we have to show them is a scaffold on the morning of execution. I assure you there is a strong muster in those far telescopic worlds, on any such morning, of those who happen to find themselves occupying the right hemisphere for a peep at *us*. How, then, if it be announced in some such telescopic world by those who make a livelihood of catching glimpses at our newspapers, whose language they have long since deciphered, that the poor victim in the morning's sacrifice is a woman? How, if it be published in that distant world, that the sufferer wears upon her head, in the eyes of many, the garlands of martyrdom? How, if it should be some Marie Antoinette, the widowed queen, coming forward on the scaffold, and presenting to the morning air her head, turned grey by sorrow,

daughter of Cæsars kneeling down humbly to kiss the guillotine, as one that worships death? How, if it were the noble Charlotte Corday, that in the bloom of youth, that with the loveliest of persons, that with homage waiting upon her smiles wherever she turned her face to scatter them — homage that followed those smiles as surely as the carols of birds, after showers in spring, follow the reappearing sun and the racing of sunbeams over the hills — yet thought all these things cheaper than the dust upon her sandals, in comparison of deliverance from hell for her dear suffering France! Ah! these were spectacles indeed for those sympathising people in distant worlds; and some, perhaps, would suffer a sort of martyrdom themselves, because they could not testify their wrath, could not bear witness to the strength of love and to the fury of hatred that burned within them at such scenes; could not gather into golden urns some of that glorious dust which rested in the catacombs of earth.

XXVII. On the Wednesday after Trinity Sunday in 1431, being then about nineteen years of age, the Maid of Arc underwent her martyrdom. She was conducted before mid-day, guarded by eight hundred spearmen, to a platform of prodigious height, constructed of wooden billets supported by occasional walls of lath and plaster, and traversed by hollow spaces in every direction for the creation of air-currents. The pile “struck terror,” says M. Michelet, “by its height”; and, as usual, the English purpose in this is viewed as one of pure malignity. But there are two ways of explaining all that. It is probable that the purpose was merciful. On the circumstances of the execution I shall not linger. Yet, to mark the almost fatal felicity of M. Michelet in finding out whatever may injure the English name, at a moment when every reader will be interested in Joanna’s personal appearance, it is really edifying to notice the ingenuity by which he draws into light from a dark corner a very unjust account of it, and neglects, though lying upon the highroad, a very pleasing one. Both are from English pens. Grafton, a chronicler, but little read, being a stiffnecked John Bull, thought fit to say, that no

wonder Joanna should be a virgin, since her "foule face" was a satisfactory solution of that particular merit. Holinshead, on the other hand, a chronicler somewhat later, every way more important, and at one time universally read, has given a very pleasing testimony to the interesting character of Joanna's person and engaging manners. Neither of these men lived till the following century, so that personally this evidence is none at all. Grafton sullenly and carelessly believed as he wished to believe; Holinshead took pains to inquire, and reports undoubtedly the general impression of France. But I cite the case as illustrating M. Michelet's candour.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the many ebullitions of M. Michelet's fury against us poor English, are four which will be likely to amuse the reader; and they are the more conspicuous in collision with the justice which he sometimes does us, and the very indignant admiration which, under some aspects, he grants to us.

1. Our English literature he admires with some gnashing of teeth. He pronounces it "fine and sombre," but, I lament to add, "sceptical, Judaic, Satanic—in a word, antichristian." That Lord Byron should figure as a member of this diabolical corporation, will not surprise men. It *will* surprise them to hear that Milton is one of its Satanic leaders. Many are the generous and eloquent Frenchmen, besides Chateaubriand, who have, in the course of the last thirty years, nobly suspended their own burning nationality, in order to render a more rapturous homage at the feet of Milton; and some of them have raised Milton almost to a level with angelic natures. Not one of them has thought of looking for him *below* the earth. As to Shakspeare, M. Michelet detects in him a most extraordinary mare's nest. It is this: he does "not recollect to have seen the name of God" in any part of his works. On reading such words, it is natural to rub one's eyes, and suspect that all one has ever seen in this world may have been a pure ocular delusion. In particular, I begin myself to suspect that the word "*la gloire*" never occurs in any Parisian journal. "The great English nation," says M. Michelet, "has one immense profound vice," to wit, "pride." Why, really, that may be true; but we have a neighbour not absolutely clear of an "immense profound vice," as like ours in colour and shape as cherry to cherry. In short, M. Michelet thinks us, by fits and starts, admirable, only that we are detestable; and he would adore some of our authors, were it not that so intensely he could have wished to kick them.

2. M. Michelet thinks to lodge an arrow in our sides by a very odd remark upon Thomas à Kempis: which is, that a man of any conceivable

XXVIII. The circumstantial incidents of the execution, unless with more space than I can now command, I should be unwilling to relate. I should fear to injure, by imperfect report, a martyrdom which to myself appears so unspeakably

European blood — a Finlander, suppose, or a Zantiote — might have written Tom, only not an Englishman. Whether an Englishman could have forged Tom, must remain a matter of doubt, unless the thing had been tried long ago. That problem was intercepted for ever by Tom's perverseness in choosing to manufacture himself. Yet, since nobody is better aware than M. Michelet that this very point of Kempis *having* manufactured Kempis is furiously and hopelessly litigated, three or four nations claiming to have forged his work for him, the shocking old doubt will raise its snaky head once more — whether this forger, who rests in so much darkness, might not, after all, be of English blood. Tom, it may be feared, is known to modern English literature chiefly by an irreverent mention of his name in a line of Peter Pindar's (Dr. Wolcot) fifty years back, where he is described as

"Kempis Tom,  
Who clearly shows the way to Kingdom Come."

Few in these days can have read him, unless in the Methodist version of John Wesley. Amongst those few, however, happens to be myself; which arose from the accident of having, when a boy of eleven, received a copy of the "*De Imitatione Christi*" as a bequest from a relation who died very young; from which cause, and from the external prettiness of the book, being a Glasgow reprint by the celebrated Foulis, and gaily bound, I was induced to look into it; and finally read it many times over, partly out of some sympathy which, even in those days, I had with its simplicity and devotional fervour; but much more from the savage delight I found in laughing at Tom's Latinity. *That*, I freely grant to M. Michelet, is inimitable. Yet, after all, it is not certain whether the original *was* Latin. But, however *that* may have been, if it is possible that M. Michelet<sup>1</sup> can be accurate in saying that there are no less than *sixty* French versions (not editions, observe, but separate versions) existing of the "*De Imitatione*,"

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<sup>1</sup> "*If M. Michelet can be accurate*": — However, on consideration, this statement does not depend on Michelet. The bibliographer Barbier has absolutely *specified* sixty in a separate dissertation, *soixante traductions*, amongst those even that have not escaped the search. The Italian translations are said to be thirty. As to mere *editions*, not counting the early MSS. for half-a-century before printing was introduced, those in Latin amount to two thousand, and those in French to one thousand. Meantime, it is very clear to me that this astonishing popularity, so entirely unparalleled in literature, could not have existed except in Roman Catholic times, nor subsequently have lingered in any Protestant land. It was the denial of Scripture fountains to thirsty lands which made this slender rill of Scripture truth so passionately welcome.



grand. Yet for a purpose, pointing not at Joanna, but at M. Michelet — viz., to convince him that an Englishman is capable of thinking more highly of *La Pucelle* than even her admiring countrymen — I shall, in parting, allude to one or two

how prodigious must have been the adaptation of the book to the religious heart of the fifteenth century! Excepting the Bible, but excepting *that* only, in Protestant lands, no book known to man has had the same distinction. It is the most marvellous bibliographical fact on record.

3. Our English girls, it seems, are as faulty in one way as we English males in another. None of us men could have written the *Opera Omnia* of Mr. à Kempis; neither could any of our girls have assumed male attire like *La Pucelle*. But why? Because, says Michelet, English girls and German think so much of an indecorum. Well, that is a good fault, generally speaking. But M. Michelet ought to have remembered a fact in the martyrologies which justifies both parties — the French heroine for doing, and the general choir of English girls for *not* doing. A female saint, specially renowned in France, had, for a reason as weighty as Joanna's — viz., expressly to shield her modesty amongst men — worn a male military harness. That reason and that example authorised *La Pucelle*; but our English girls, as a body, have seldom any such reason, and certainly no such saintly example, to plead. This excuses *them*. Yet, still, if it is indispensable to the national character that our young women should now and then trespass over the frontier of decorum, it then becomes a patriotic duty in me to assure M. Michelet that we *have* such ardent females amongst us, and in a long series — some detected in naval hospitals, when too sick to remember their disguise; some on fields of battle; multitudes never detected at all; some only suspected; and others discharged without noise by war offices and other absurd people. In our navy, both royal and commercial, and generally from deep remembrances of slighted love, women have sometimes served in disguise for many years, taking contentedly their daily allowance of burgoo, biscuit, or cannon-balls — anything, in short, digestible or indigestible, that it might please Providence to send. One thing, at least, is to their credit: never any of these poor masks, with their deep silent remembrances, have been detected through murmuring, or what is nautically understood by “skulking.” So, for once, M. Michelet has an *erratum* to enter upon the fly-leaf of his book in presentation copies.

4. But the last of these ebullitions is the most lively. We English, at Orléans, and after Orléans (which is not quite so extraordinary, if all were told), fled before the Maid of Arc. Yes, says M. Michelet, you *did*: deny it, if you can. Deny it, *mon cher*? I don't mean to deny it. Running away, in many cases, is a thing so excellent, that no philosopher would, at times, condescend to adopt any other step. All of us nations in Europe,

traits in Joanna's demeanour on the scaffold, and to one or two in that of the bystanders, which authorise me in questioning an opinion of his upon this martyr's firmness. The reader ought to be reminded that Joanna D'Arc was subjected to an unusually unfair trial of opinion. Any of the elder Christian martyrs had not much to fear of *personal* rancour. The martyr was chiefly regarded as the enemy of Cæsar; at times, also, where any knowledge of the Christian faith and morals existed, with the enmity that arises spontaneously in the worldly against the spiritual. But the martyr, though disloyal, was not supposed to be therefore anti-national; and still less was *individually* hateful. What was hated (if anything) belonged to his class, not to himself separately. Now, Joanna, if hated at all, was hated personally, and in Rouen on national grounds. Hence there would be a certainty of calumny arising against *her*, such as would not affect martyrs in general. That being the case, it would follow of necessity that some people would impute to her a willingness to recant. No inno-

without one exception, have shown our philosophy in that way at times. Even people, "*qui ne se rendent pas*" have deigned both to run and to shout, "*Sauve qui peut!*" at odd times of sunset; though, for my part, I have no pleasure in recalling unpleasant remembrances to brave men; and yet, really, being so philosophic, they ought *not* to be unpleasant. But the amusing feature in M. Michelet's reproach is the way in which he *improves* and varies against us the charge of running, as if he were singing a catch. Listen to him: They "*showed their backs*," did these English. (Hip, hip, hurrah! three times three!) "*Behind good walls they let themselves be taken*." (Hip, hip! nine times nine!) They "*ran as fast as their legs could carry them*." (Hurrah! twenty-seven times twenty-seven!) They "*ran before a girl*"; they did. (Hurrah! eighty-one times eighty-one!) This reminds one of criminal indictments on the old model in English courts, where (for fear the prisoner should escape) the crown lawyer varied the charge perhaps through forty counts. The law laid its guns so as to rake the accused at every possible angle. Whilst the indictment was reading, he seemed a monster of crime in his own eyes; and yet, after all, the poor fellow had but committed one offence, and not always *that*. N. B. — Not having the French original at hand, I make my quotations from a friend's copy of Mr. Walter Kelly's translation, which seems to me faithful, spirited, and idiomatically English — liable, in fact, only to the single reproach of occasional provincialisms.

cence could escape *that*. Now, had she really testified this willingness on the scaffold, it would have argued nothing at all but the weakness of a genial nature shrinking from the instant approach of torment. And those will often pity that weakness most, who, in their own persons, would yield to it least. Meantime, there never was a calumny uttered that drew less support from the recorded circumstances. It rests upon no *positive* testimony, and it has a weight of contradicting testimony to stem. And yet, strange to say, M. Michelet, who at times seems to admire the Maid of Arc as much as I do, is the one sole writer amongst her *friends* who lends some countenance to this odious slander. His words are, that, if she did not utter this word *recant* with her lips, she uttered it in her heart. "Whether she *said* the word is uncertain : but I affirm that she *thought* it."

XXIX. Now, I affirm that she did not ; not in any sense of the word "*thought*" applicable to the case. Here is France calumniating *La Pucelle* : here is England defending her. M. Michelet can only mean that, on *à priori* principles, every woman must be presumed liable to such a weakness : that Joanna was a woman ; *ergo*, that she was liable to such a weakness. That is, he only supposes her to have uttered the word by an argument which presumes it impossible for anybody to have done otherwise. I, on the contrary, throw the *onus* of the argument not on presumable tendencies of nature, but on the known facts of that morning's execution, as recorded by multitudes. What else, I demand, than mere weight of metal, absolute nobility of deportment, broke the vast line of battle then arrayed against her ? What else but her meek, saintly demeanour won, from the enemies that till now had believed her a witch, tears of rapturous admiration ? "Ten thousand men," says M. Michelet himself — "ten thousand men wept" ; and of these ten thousand the majority were political enemies knitted together by cords of superstition. What else was it but her constancy, united with her angelic gentleness, that drove the fanatic English soldier — who had sworn to throw a faggot on her scaffold as *his* tribute

of abhorrence, that *did* so, that fulfilled his vow — suddenly to turn away a penitent for life, saying everywhere that he had seen a dove rising upon wings to heaven from the ashes where she had stood? What else drove the executioner to kneel at every shrine for pardon to *his* share in the tragedy? And, if all this were insufficient, then I cite the closing act of her life as valid on her behalf, were all other testimonies against her. The executioner had been directed to apply his torch from below. He did so. The fiery smoke rose upward in billowing volumes. A Dominican monk was then standing almost at her side. Wrapped up in his sublime office, he saw not the danger, but still persisted in his prayers. Even then, when the last enemy was racing up the fiery stairs to seize her, even at that moment did this noblest of girls think only for *him*, the one friend that would not forsake her, and not for herself; bidding him with her last breath to care for his own preservation, but to leave *her* to God. That girl, whose latest breath ascended in this sublime expression of self-oblivion, did not utter the word *recant* either with her lips or in her heart. No; she did not, though one should rise from the dead to swear it.

XXX. Bishop of Beauvais! thy victim died in fire upon a scaffold — thou upon a down bed. But for the departing minutes of life, both are oftentimes alike. At the farewell crisis, when the gates of death are opening, and flesh is resting from its struggles, oftentimes the tortured and the torturer have the same truce from carnal torment; both sink together into sleep; together both sometimes kindle into dreams. When the mortal mists were gathering fast upon you two, bishop and shepherd girl — when the pavilions of life were closing up their shadowy curtains about you — let us try, through the gigantic glooms, to decipher the flying features of your separate visions.

XXXI. The shepherd girl that had delivered France — she, from her dungeon, she, from her baiting at the stake, she, from her duel with fire, as she entered her last dream — saw Dom-

rémy, saw the fountain of Domrémy, saw the pomp of forests in which her childhood had wandered. That Easter festival, which man had denied to her languishing heart — that resurrection of spring-time, which the darkness of dungeons had intercepted from *her*, hungering after the glorious liberty of forests — were by God given back into her hands as jewels that had been stolen from her by robbers. With those, perhaps (for the minutes of dreams can stretch into ages), was given back to her by God the bliss of childhood. By special privilege, for *her* might be created, in this farewell dream, a second childhood, innocent as the first; but not, like *that*, sad with the gloom of a fearful mission in the rear. This mission had now been fulfilled. The storm was weathered, the skirts even of that mighty storm were drawing off. The blood that she was to reckon for had been exacted; the tears that she was to shed in secret had been paid to the last. The hatred to herself in all eyes had been faced steadily, had been suffered, had been survived. And in her last fight upon the scaffold she had triumphed gloriously; victoriously she had tasted the stings of death. For all, except this comfort from her farewell dream, she had died — died amidst the tears of ten thousand enemies — died amidst the drums and trumpets of armies — died amidst peals redoubling upon peals, volleys upon volleys, from the saluting clarions of martyrs.

XXXII. Bishop of Beauvais! because the guilt-burdened man is in dreams haunted and waylaid by the most frightful of his crimes, and because upon that fluctuating mirror — rising (like the mocking mirrors of *mirage* in Arabian deserts) from the fens of death — most of all are reflected the sweet countenances which the man has laid in ruins; therefore I know, bishop, that you also, entering your final dream, saw Domrémy. That fountain, of which the witnesses spoke so much, showed itself to your eyes in pure morning dews: but neither dews, nor the holy dawn, could cleanse away the bright spots of innocent blood upon its surface. By the fountain, bishop, you saw a woman seated, that hid her face.

But, as *you* draw near, the woman raises her wasted features. Would Domrémy know them again for the features of her child? Ah, but *you* know them, bishop, well! Oh, mercy! what a groan was *that* which the servants, waiting outside the bishop's dream at his bedside, heard from his labouring heart, as at this moment he turned away from the fountain and the woman, seeking rest in the forests afar off. Yet not *so* to escape the woman, whom once again he must behold before he dies. In the forests to which he prays for pity, will he find a respite? What a tumult, what a gathering of feet is there! In glades, where only wild deer should run, armies and nations are assembling; towering in the fluctuating crowd are phantoms that belong to departed hours. There is the great English Prince, Regent of France. There is my Lord of Winchester, the princely cardinal, that died and made no sign. There is the Bishop of Beauvais, clinging to the shelter of thickets. What building is that which hands so rapid are raising? Is it a martyr's scaffold? Will they burn the child of Domrémy a second time? No: it is a tribunal that rises to the clouds; and two nations stand around it, waiting for a trial. Shall my Lord of Beauvais sit again upon the judgment-seat, and again number the hours for the innocent? Ah no! he is the prisoner at the bar. Already all is waiting: the mighty audience is gathered, the Court is hurrying to their seats, the witnesses are arrayed, the trumpets are sounding, the judge is taking his place. Oh! but this is sudden. My lord, have you no counsel? "Counsel I have none: in heaven above, or on earth beneath, counsellor there is none now that would take a brief from *me*: all are silent." Is it, indeed, come to this? Alas! the time is short, the tumult is wondrous, the crowd stretches away into infinity, but yet I will search in it for somebody to take your brief: I know of somebody that will be your counsel. Who is this that cometh from Domrémy? Who is she in bloody coronation robes from Rheims? Who is she that cometh with blackened flesh from walking the furnaces of

Rouen? This is she, the shepherd girl, counsellor that had none for herself, whom I choose, bishop, for yours. She it is, I engage, that shall take my lord's brief. She it is, bishop, that would plead for you: yes, bishop, SHE — when heaven and earth are silent.





# THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH



# THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

## SECTION THE FIRST. — THE GLORY OF MOTION

I. SOME twenty or more years before I matriculated at Oxford, Mr. Palmer, at that time M. P. for Bath, had accomplished two things, very hard to do on our little planet, the Earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in comets—he had invented mail-coaches, and he had married the daughter<sup>1</sup> of a duke. He was, therefore, just twice as great a man as Galileo, who did certainly invent (or, which is the same thing,<sup>2</sup> discover) the satellites of Jupiter, those very next things extant to mail-coaches in the two capital pretensions of speed and keeping time, but, on the other hand, who did *not* marry the daughter of a duke.

II. These mail-coaches, as organised by Mr. Palmer, are entitled to a circumstantial notice from myself, having had so large a share in developing the anarchies of my subsequent dreams; an agency which they accomplished, 1st, through velocity, at that time unprecedented—for they first revealed the glory of motion; 2dly, through grand effects for the eye between lamp-light and the darkness upon solitary roads; 3dly, through animal beauty and power so often displayed in the class of horses selected for this mail service; 4thly, through the conscious presence of a central intellect, that,

<sup>1</sup> Lady Madeline Gordon.

<sup>2</sup> "*The same thing*":—Thus, in the calendar of the Church Festivals, the discovery of the true cross (by Helen, the mother of Constantine) is recorded (and one might think—with the express consciousness of sarcasm) as the *Invention* of the Cross.

in the midst of vast distances<sup>1</sup> — of storms, of darkness, of danger — overruled all obstacles into one steady co-operation to a national result. For my own feeling, this post-office service spoke as by some mighty orchestra, where a thousand instruments, all disregarding each other, and so far in danger of discord, yet all obedient as slaves to the supreme *baton* of some great leader, terminate in a perfection of harmony like that of heart, brain, and lungs, in a healthy animal organisation. But, finally, that particular element in this whole combination which most impressed myself, and through which it is that to this hour Mr. Palmer's mail-coach system tyrannises over my dreams by terror and terrific beauty, lay in the awful *political* mission which at that time it fulfilled. The mail-coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo. These were the harvests that, in the grandeur of their reaping, redeemed the tears and blood in which they had been sown. Neither was the meanest peasant so much below the grandeur and the sorrow of the times as to confound battles such as these, which were gradually moulding the destinies of Christendom, with the vulgar conflicts of ordinary warfare, so often no more than gladiatorial trials of national prowess. The victories of England in this stupendous contest rose of themselves as natural *Te Deums* to heaven; and it was felt by the thoughtful that such victories, at such a crisis of general prostration, were not more beneficial to ourselves than finally to France, our enemy, and to the nations of all western or central Europe, through whose pusillanimity it was that the French domination had prospered.

III. The mail-coach, as the national organ for publishing these mighty events, thus diffusively influential, became itself a spiritualised and glorified object to an impassioned heart;

<sup>1</sup> “*Vast distances*”: — One case was familiar to mail-coach travellers, where two mails in opposite directions, north and south, starting at the same minute from points six hundred miles apart, met almost constantly at a particular bridge which bisected the total distance.

and naturally, in the Oxford of that day, *all* hearts were impassioned, as being all (or nearly all) in *early* manhood. In most universities there is one single college; in Oxford there were five-and-twenty, all of which were peopled by young men, the *élite* of their own generation; not boys, but men; none under eighteen. In some of these many colleges, the custom permitted the student to keep what are called "short terms"; that is, the four terms of Michaelmas, Lent, Easter, and Act, were kept by a residence, in the aggregate, of ninety-one days, or thirteen weeks. Under this interrupted residence, it was possible that a student might have a reason for going down to his home four times in the year. This made eight journeys to and fro. But, as these homes lay dispersed through all the shires of the island, and most of us disdained all coaches except his majesty's mail, no city out of London could pretend to so extensive a connection with Mr. Palmer's establishment as Oxford. Three mails, at the least, I remember as passing every day through Oxford, and benefiting by my personal patronage — viz., the Worcester, the Gloucester, and the Holyhead mail. Naturally, therefore, it became a point of some interest with us, whose journeys revolved every six weeks on an average, to look a little into the executive details of the system. With some of these Mr. Palmer had no concern; they rested upon bye-laws enacted by posting houses for their own benefit, and upon other bye-laws, equally stern, enacted by the inside passengers for the illustration of their own haughty exclusiveness. These last were of a nature to rouse our scorn, from which the transition was not very long to systematic mutiny. Up to this time, say 1804, or 1805 (the year of Trafalgar), it had been the fixed assumption of the four inside people (as an old tradition of all public carriages derived from the reign of Charles II.), that they, the illustrious quaternion, constituted a porcelain variety of the human race, whose dignity would have been compromised by exchanging one word of civility with the three miserable delf-ware outsides. Even to have kicked an outsider, might have been held to attain the foot concerned

in that operation ; so that, perhaps, it would have required an act of Parliament to restore its purity of blood. What words, then, could express the horror, and the sense of treason, in that case which *had* happened, where all three outsiders (the trinity of Pariahs) made a vain attempt to sit down at the same breakfast-table or dinner-table with the consecrated four ? I myself witnessed such an attempt ; and on that occasion a benevolent old gentleman endeavoured to soothe his three holy associates, by suggesting that, if the outsiders were indicted for this criminal attempt at the next assizes, the court would regard it as a case of lunacy, or *delirium tremens*, rather than of treason. England owes much of her grandeur to the depth of the aristocratic element in her social composition, when pulling against her strong democracy. I am not the man to laugh at it. But sometimes, undoubtedly, it expressed itself in comic shapes. The course taken with the infatuated outsiders, in the particular attempt which I have noticed, was, that the waiter, beckoning them away from the privileged *salle-à-manger*, sang out, "This way, my good men," and then enticed these good men away to the kitchen. But that plan had not always answered. Sometimes, though rarely, cases occurred where the intruders, being stronger than usual, or more vicious than usual, resolutely refused to budge, and so far carried their point as to have a separate table arranged for themselves in a corner of the general room. Yet, if an Indian screen could be found ample enough to plant them out from the very eyes of the high table, or *duis*, it then became possible to assume as a fiction of law — that the three delf fellows, after all, were not present. They could be ignored by the porcelain men, under the maxim, that objects not appearing, and not existing, are governed by the same logical construction.<sup>1</sup>

IV. Such being, at that time, the usages of mail-coaches, what was to be done by us of young Oxford ? We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insiders themselves

<sup>1</sup> *De non apparentibus, &c.*

as often very questionable characters—were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignities? If our dress and bearing sheltered us, generally, from the suspicion of being “raff” (the name at that period for “snobs”<sup>1</sup>) we really *were* such constructively, by the place we assumed. If we did not submit to the deep shadow of eclipse, we entered at least the skirts of its penumbra. And the analogy of theatres was valid against us, where no man can complain of the annoyances incident to the pit or gallery, having his instant remedy in paying the higher price of the boxes. But the soundness of this analogy we disputed. In the case of the theatre, it cannot be pretended that the inferior situations have any separate attractions, unless the pit may be supposed to have an advantage for the purposes of the critic or the dramatic reporter. But the critic or reporter is a rarity. For most people, the sole benefit is in the price. Now, on the contrary, the outside of the mail had its own incommunicable advantages. These we could not forego. The higher price we would willingly have paid, but not the price connected with the condition of riding inside; which condition we pronounced insufferable. The air, the freedom of prospect, the proximity to the horses, the elevation of seat—these were what we required; but, above all, the certain anticipation of purchasing occasional opportunities of driving.

V. Such was the difficulty which pressed us; and under the coercion of this difficulty, we instituted a searching inquiry into the true quality and valuation of the different apartments about the mail. We conducted this inquiry on metaphysical principles; and it was ascertained satisfactorily, that the roof of the coach, which by some weak men had been called the attics, and by some the garrets, was in reality the drawing-room; in which drawing-room the box was the chief

<sup>1</sup> “*Snobs*,” and its antithesis, “*nobs*,” arose among the internal factions of shoemakers perhaps ten years later. Possibly enough, the terms may have existed much earlier; but they were then first made known, picturesquely and effectively, by a trial at some assizes which happened to fix the public attention.

ottoman or sofa ; whilst it appeared that the *inside*, which had been traditionally regarded as the only room tenantable by gentlemen, was, in fact, the coal-cellar in disguise.

VI. Great wits jump. The very same idea had not long before struck the celestial intellect of China. Amongst the presents carried out by our first embassy to that country was a state-coach. It had been specially selected as a personal gift by George III. ; but the exact mode of using it was an intense mystery to Peking. The ambassador, indeed (Lord Macartney), had made some imperfect explanations upon this point ; but, as his excellency communicated these in a diplomatic whisper, at the very moment of his departure, the celestial intellect was very feebly illuminated, and it became necessary to call a cabinet council on the grand state question, "Where was the Emperor to sit ?" The hammer-cloth happened to be unusually gorgeous ; and partly on that consideration, but partly also because the box offered the most elevated seat, was nearest to the moon, and undeniably went foremost, it was resolved by acclamation that the box was the imperial throne, and for the scoundrel who drove, he might sit where he could find a perch. The horses, therefore, being harnessed, solemnly his imperial majesty ascended his new English throne under a flourish of trumpets, having the first lord of the treasury on his right hand, and the chief jester on his left. Peking gloried in the spectacle ; and in the whole flowery people, constructively present by representation, there was but one discontented person, and *that* was the coachman. This mutinous individual audaciously shouted, "Where am I to sit ?" But the privy council, incensed by his disloyalty, unanimously opened the door, and kicked him into the inside. He had all the inside places to himself ; but such is the rapacity of ambition, that he was still dissatisfied. "I say," he cried out in an extempore petition, addressed to the emperor through the window — "I say, how am I to catch hold of the reins ?" — "Anyhow," was the imperial answer ; "don't trouble *me*, man, in my glory. How catch the reins ? Why, through the windows, through the keyholes — *anyhow*." Finally



this contumacious coachman lengthened the check-strings into a sort of jury-reins, communicating with the horses ; with these he drove as steadily as Pekin had any right to expect. The emperor returned after the briefest of circuits ; he descended in great pomp from his throne, with the severest resolution never to remount it. A public thanksgiving was ordered for his majesty's happy escape from the disease of broken neck ; and the state-coach was dedicated thenceforward as a votive offering to the god Fo, Fo — whom the learned more accurately called Fi, Fi.

VII. A revolution of this same Chinese character did young Oxford of that era effect in the constitution of mail-coach society. It was a perfect French revolution ; and we had good reason to say, *ça ira*. In fact, it soon became *too* popular. The “public” — a well known character, particularly disagreeable, though slightly respectable, and notorious for affecting the chief seats in synagogues — had at first loudly opposed this revolution ; but when the opposition showed itself to be ineffectual, our disagreeable friend went into it with headlong zeal. At first it was a sort of race between us ; and, as the public is usually from thirty to fifty years old, naturally we of young Oxford, that averaged about twenty, had the advantage. Then the public took to bribing, giving fees to horse-keepers, &c., who hired out their persons as warming-pans on the box-seat. *That*, you know, was shocking to all moral sensibilities. Come to bribery, said we, and there is an end to all morality, Aristotle's, Zeno's, Cicero's, or anybody's. And, besides, of what use was it ? For *we* bribed also. And as our bribes to those of the public were as five shillings to sixpence, here again young Oxford had the advantage. But the contest was ruinous to the principles of the stables connected with the mails. This whole corporation was constantly bribed, rebribed, and often sur-rebribed ; a mail-coach yard was like the hustings in a contested election ; and a horse-keeper, ostler, or helper, was held by the philosophical at that time to be the most corrupt character in the nation.

VIII. There was an impression upon the public mind, natural enough from the continually augmenting velocity of the mail, but quite erroneous, that an outside seat on this class of carriages was a post of danger. On the contrary, I maintained that, if a man had become nervous from some gipsy prediction in his childhood, allocating to a particular moon now approaching some unknown danger, and he should inquire earnestly, "Whither can I fly for shelter? Is a prison the safest retreat? or a lunatic hospital? or the British Museum?" I should have replied, "Oh, no; I'll tell you what to do. Take lodgings for the next forty days on the box of his majesty's mail. Nobody can touch you there. If it is by bills at ninety days after date that you are made unhappy — if noters and protesters are the sort of wretches whose astrological shadows darken the house of life — then note you what I vehemently protest — viz., that no matter though the sheriff and under-sheriff in every county should be running after you with his *posse*, touch a hair of your head he cannot whilst you keep house, and have your legal domicile on the box of the mail. It is felony to stop the mail; even the sheriff cannot do that. And an *extra* touch of the whip to the leaders (no great matter if it grazes the sheriff) at any time guarantees your safety." In fact, a bedroom in a quiet house seems a safe enough retreat, yet it is liable to its own notorious nuisances — to robbers by night, to rats, to fire. But the mail laughs at these terrors. To robbers, the answer is packed up and ready for delivery in the barrel of the guard's blunderbuss. Rats again! — there *are* none about mail-coaches, any more than snakes in Von Troil's Iceland; <sup>1</sup> except, indeed, now and then a parliamentary rat, who always hides his shame in what I have shown to be the "coal cellar." And as to fire, I never knew but one in a mail-coach, which was in the Exeter mail, and caused by an obstinate sailor bound to Devonport. Jack, making light of

<sup>1</sup> "Von Troil's Iceland": — The allusion is to a well-known chapter in Von Troil's work, entitled, "Concerning the Snakes of Iceland." The entire chapter consists of these six words — "*There are no snakes in Iceland.*"

the law and the lawgiver that had set their faces against his offence, insisted on taking up a forbidden seat<sup>1</sup> in the rear of the roof, from which he could exchange his own yarns with those of the guard. No greater offence was then known to mail-coaches; it was treason, it was *lesa majestas*, it was by tendency arson; and the ashes of Jack's pipe, falling amongst the straw of the hinder boot, containing the mail-bags, raised a flame which (aided by the wind of our motion) threatened a revolution in the republic of letters. Yet even this left the sanctity of the box unviolated. In dignified repose, the coachman and myself sat on, resting with benign composure upon our knowledge that the fire would have to burn its way through four inside passengers before it could reach ourselves. I remarked to the coachman, with a quotation from Virgil's "Æneid" really too hackneyed —

"Jam proximus ardet  
Ucalegon."

But, recollecting that the Virgilian part of the coachman's education might have been neglected, I interpreted so far as to say, that perhaps at that moment the flames were catching

<sup>1</sup> "*Forbidden seat*": — The very sternest code of rules was enforced upon the mails by the Post-office. Throughout England, only three outsides were allowed, of whom one was to sit on the box, and the other two immediately behind the box; none, under any pretext, to come near the guard; an indispensable caution; since else, under the guise of a passenger, a robber might by any one of a thousand advantages — which sometimes are created, but always are favoured, by the animation of frank social intercourse — have disarmed the guard. Beyond the Scottish border, the regulation was so far relaxed as to allow of *four* outsides, but not relaxed at all as to the mode of placing them. One, as before, was seated on the box, and the other three on the front of the roof, with a determinate and ample separation from the little insulated chair of the guard. This relaxation was conceded by way of compensating to Scotland her disadvantages in point of population. England, by the superior density of her population, might always count upon a large fund of profits in the fractional trips of chance passengers riding for short distances of two or three stages. In Scotland, this chance counted for much less. And therefore, to make good the deficiency, Scotland was allowed a compensatory profit upon one *extra* passenger.

hold of our worthy brother and inside passenger, Ucalegon. The coachman made no answer, which is my own way when a stranger addresses me either in Syriac or in Coptic, but by his faint sceptical smile he seemed to insinuate that he knew better ; for that Ucalegon, as it happened, was not in the way-bill, and therefore could not have been booked.

IX. No dignity is perfect which does not at some point ally itself with the mysterious. The connection of the mail with the state and the executive government — a connection obvious, but yet not strictly defined — gave to the whole mail establishment an official grandeur which did us service on the roads, and invested us with seasonable terrors. Not the less impressive were those terrors, because their legal limits were imperfectly ascertained. Look at those turnpike gates ; with what deferential hurry, with what an obedient start, they fly open at our approach ! Look at that long line of carts and carters ahead, audaciously usurping the very crest of the road. Ah ! traitors, they do not hear us as yet ; but, as soon as the dreadful blast of our horn reaches them with proclamation of our approach, see with what frenzy of trepidation they fly to their horses' heads, and deprecate our wrath by the precipitation of their crane-neck quarterings. Treason they feel to be their crime ; each individual carter feels himself under the ban of confiscation and attainder ; his blood is attainted through six generations ; and nothing is wanting but the headsman and his axe, the block and the saw-dust, to close up the vista of his horrors. What ! shall it be within benefit of clergy to delay the king's message on the highroad ? — to interrupt the great respirations, ebb and flood, *systole* and *diastole*, of the national intercourse ? — to endanger the safety of tidings, running day and night between all nations and languages ? Or can it be fancied, amongst the weakest of men, that the bodies of the criminals will be given up to their widows for Christian burial ? Now the doubts which were raised as to our powers did more to wrap them in terror, by wrapping them in uncertainty, than could have been effected by the sharpest definitions of the law from the Quarter

Sessions. We, on our parts (we, the collective mail, I mean), did our utmost to exalt the idea of our privileges by the insolence with which we wielded them. Whether this insolence rested upon law that gave it a sanction, or upon conscious power that haughtily dispensed with that sanction, equally it spoke from a potential station ; and the agent, in each particular insolence of the moment, was viewed reverentially, as one having authority.

X. Sometimes after breakfast his majesty's mail would become frisky ; and, in its difficult wheelings amongst the intricacies of early markets, it would upset an apple-cart, a cart loaded with eggs, &c. Huge was the affliction and dismay, awful was the smash. I, as far as possible, endeavoured in such a case to represent the conscience and moral sensibilities of the mail ; and, when wildernesses of eggs were lying poached under our horses' hoofs, then would I stretch forth my hands in sorrow, saying (in words too celebrated at that time, from the false echoes<sup>1</sup> of Marengo), "Ah ! wherefore have we not time to weep over you ?" which was evidently impossible, since, in fact, we had not time to laugh over them. Tied to post-office allowance, in some cases of fifty minutes for eleven miles, could the royal mail pretend to undertake the offices of sympathy and condolence ? Could it be expected to provide tears for the accidents of the road ? If even it seemed to trample on humanity, it did so, I felt, in discharge of its own more peremptory duties.

XI. Upholding the morality of the mail, *à fortiori* I upheld its rights ; as a matter of duty, I stretched to the uttermost its privilege of imperial precedency, and astonished weak minds by the feudal powers which I hinted to be lurking constructively in the charters of this proud establishment.

<sup>1</sup> "False echoes" : — Yes, false ! for the words ascribed to Napoleon, as breathed to the memory of Desaix, never were uttered at all. They stand in the same category of theatrical fictions as the cry of the foundering line-of-battle ship *Vengeur*, as the vaunt of General Cambronne at Waterloo, "*La Garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas*," or as the repartees of Talleyrand.

Once I remember being on the box of the Holyhead mail, between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, when a tawdry thing from Birmingham, some "Tallyho" or "Highflyer," all flaunting with green and gold, came up alongside of us. What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and colour in this plebeian wretch! The single ornament on our dark ground of chocolate colour was the mighty shield of the imperial arms, but emblazoned in proportions as modest as a signet-ring bears to a seal of office. Even this was displayed only on a single panel, whispering, rather than proclaiming, our relations to the mighty state; whilst the beast from Birmingham, our green-and-gold friend from false, fleeting, perjured Brummagem, had as much writing and painting on its sprawling flanks as would have puzzled a decipherer from the tombs of Luxor. For some time this Birmingham machine ran along by our side—a piece of familiarity that already of itself seemed to me sufficiently jacobinical. But all at once a movement of the horses announced a desperate intention of leaving us behind. "Do you see *that*?" I said to the coachman—"I see," was his short answer. He was wide awake, yet he waited longer than seemed prudent; for the horses of our audacious opponent had a disagreeable air of freshness and power. But his motive was loyal; his wish was, that the Birmingham conceit should be full-blown before he froze it. When *that* seemed right, he unloosed, or, to speak by a stronger word, he *sprang*, his known resources: he slipped our royal horses like cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, after the affrighted game. How they could retain such a reserve of fiery power after the work they had accomplished, seemed hard to explain. But on our side, besides the physical superiority, was a tower of moral strength, namely the king's name, "which they upon the adverse faction wanted." Passing them without an effort, as it seemed, we threw them into the rear with so lengthening an interval between us, as proved in itself the bitterest mockery of their presumption; whilst our guard blew back a shattering blast of triumph, that was really too painfully full of derision.

XII. I mention this little incident for its connection with what followed. A Welsh rustic, sitting behind me, asked if I had not felt my heart burn within me during the progress of the race? I said, with philosophic calmness, *No*; because we were not racing with a mail, so that no glory could be gained. In fact, it was sufficiently mortifying that such a Birmingham thing should dare to challenge us. The Welshman replied, that he didn't see *that*; for that a cat might look at a king, and a Brummagem coach might lawfully race the Holyhead mail. "*Race* us, if you like," I replied, "though even *that* has an air of sedition, but not *beat* us. This would have been treason; and for its own sake I am glad that the 'Tallyho' was disappointed." So dissatisfied did the Welshman seem with this opinion, that at last I was obliged to tell him a very fine story from one of our elder dramatists — viz., that once, in some far oriental kingdom when the sultan of all the land, with his princes, ladies, and chief omrahs, were flying their falcons, a hawk suddenly flew at a majestic eagle; and, in defiance of the eagle's natural advantages, in contempt also of the eagle's traditional royalty, and before the whole assembled field of astonished spectators from Agra and Lahore, killed the eagle on the spot. Amazement seized the sultan at the unequal contest, and burning admiration for its unparalleled result. He commanded that the hawk should be brought before him; he caressed the bird with enthusiasm; and he ordered that, for the commemoration of his matchless courage, a diadem of gold and rubies should be solemnly placed on the hawk's head; but then that, immediately after this solemn coronation, the bird should be led off to execution, as the most valiant indeed of traitors, but not the less a traitor, as having dared to rise rebelliously against his liege lord and anointed sovereign, the eagle. "Now," said I to the Welshman, "to you and me, as men of refined sensibilities, how painful it would have been that this poor Brummagem brute, the 'Tallyho,' in the impossible case of a victory over us, should have been crowned with Birmingham tinsel, with paste diamonds, and Roman

pearls, and then led off to instant execution." The Welshman doubted if that could be warranted by law. And, when I hinted at the 6th of Edward Longshanks, chap. 18, for regulating the precedence of coaches, as being probably the statute relied on for the capital punishment of such offences, he replied drily, that if the attempt to pass a mail really were treasonable, it was a pity that the "Tallyho" appeared to have so imperfect an acquaintance with law.

XIII. The modern modes of travelling cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon *alien* evidence; as, for instance, because somebody *says* that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience, or upon the evidence of a result, as that actually we find ourselves in York four hours after leaving London. Apart from such an assertion, or such a result, I myself am little aware of the pace. But, seated on the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity. On this system the word was, *Non magna loquimur*; as upon railways, but *vivimus*. Yes, "*magna vivimus*"; we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realise our grandeurs in act, and in the very experience of life. The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubts impossible on the question of our speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed was not the product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first. But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and its electric thrillings—kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own



tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

XIV. But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. Nile nor Trafalgar has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up for ever ; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse ; the inter-agencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight solitudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process ; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking, when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot-walloppings of the boiler.

XV. Thus have perished multiform openings for public expressions of interest, scenical yet natural, in great national tidings ; for revelations of faces and groups that could not offer themselves amongst the fluctuating mobs of a railway station. The gatherings of gazers about a laurelled mail had one centre, and acknowledged one sole interest. But the crowds attending at a railway station have as little unity as running water, and own as many centres as there are separate carriages in the train.

XVI. How else, for example, than as a constant watcher for the dawn, and for the London mail that in summer months entered about daybreak amongst the lawny thickets of Marlborough forest, couldst thou, sweet Fanny of the Bath road, have become the glorified inmate of my dreams ? Yet Fanny, as the loveliest young woman for face and person that perhaps in my whole life I have beheld, merited the station which even now, from a distance of forty years, she holds in my dreams ; yes, though by links of natural association she

brings along with her a troop of dreadful creatures, fabulous and not fabulous, that are more abominable to the heart, than Fanny and the dawn are delightful.

XVII. Miss Fanny of the Bath road, strictly speaking, lived at a mile's distance from that road; but came so continually to meet the mail, that I on my frequent transits rarely missed her, and naturally connected her image with the great thoroughfare where only I had ever seen her. Why she came so punctually, I do not exactly know; but I believe with some burden of commissions to be executed in Bath, which had gathered to her own residence as a central rendezvous for converging them. The mail-coachman who drove the Bath mail and wore the royal livery,<sup>1</sup> happened to be Fanny's grandfather. A good man he was, that loved his beautiful granddaughter; and, loving her wisely, was vigilant over her deportment in any case where young Oxford might happen to be concerned. Did my vanity then suggest that I myself, individually, could fall within the line of his terrors? Certainly not, as regarded any physical pretensions that I could plead; for Fanny (as a chance passenger from her own neighbourhood once told me) counted in her train a hundred and ninety-nine professed admirers, if not open aspirants to her favour; and probably not one of the whole brigade but excelled myself in personal advantages. Ulysses even, with the unfair advantage of his accursed bow, could hardly have undertaken that amount of suitors. So the danger might have seemed slight — only that woman is universally aristocratic; it is amongst her nobilities of heart that she *is* so. Now, the aristocratic distinctions in my favour might easily

<sup>1</sup> “*Wore the royal livery*”: — The general impression was, that the royal livery belonged of right to the mail-coachmen as their professional dress. But that was an error. To the guard it *did* belong, I believe, and was obviously essential as an official warrant, and as a means of instant identification for his person, in the discharge of his important public duties. But the coachman, and especially if his place in the series did not connect him immediately with London and the General Post-office, obtained the scarlet coat only as an honorary distinction after long (or, if not long, trying and special) service.

with Miss Fanny have compensated my physical deficiencies. Did I then make love to Fanny? Why, yes; about as much love as one *could* make whilst the mail was changing horses—a process which, ten years later, did not occupy above eighty seconds; but *then*—viz., about Waterloo—it occupied five times eighty. Now, four hundred seconds offer a field quite ample enough for whispering into a young woman's ear a great deal of truth, and (by way of parenthesis) some trifle of falsehood. Grandpapa did right, therefore, to watch me. And yet, as happens too often to the grandpapas of earth, in a contest with the admirers of granddaughters, how vainly would he have watched me had I meditated any evil whispers to Fanny! She, it is my belief, would have protected herself against any man's evil suggestions. But he, as the result showed, could not have intercepted the opportunities for such suggestions. Yet, why not? Was he not active? Was he not blooming? Blooming he was as Fanny herself.

“Say, all our praises why should lords——”

Stop, that's not the line.

“Say, all our roses why should girls engross?”

The coachman showed rosy blossoms on his face deeper even than his granddaughter's—*his* being drawn from the ale cask, Fanny's from the fountains of the dawn. But, in spite of his blooming face, some infirmities he had; and one particularly in which he too much resembled a crocodile. This lay in a monstrous inaptitude for turning round. The crocodile, I presume, owes that inaptitude to the absurd *length* of his back; but in our grandpapa it arose rather from the absurd *breadth* of his back, combined, possibly, with some growing stiffness in his legs. Now, upon this crocodile infirmity of his I planted a human advantage for tendering my homage to Miss Fanny. In defiance of all his honourable vigilance, no sooner had he presented to us his mighty Jovian back (what a field for displaying to mankind his royal scarlet!), whilst inspecting professionally the buckles, the straps, and the

silvery turrets<sup>1</sup> of his harness, than I raised Miss Fanny's hand to my lips, and, by the mixed tenderness and respectfulness of my manner, caused her easily to understand how happy it would make me to rank upon her list as No. 10 or 12, in which case a few casualties amongst her lovers (and observe, they *hanged* liberally in those days) might have promoted me speedily to the top of the tree; as, on the other hand, with how much loyalty of submission I acquiesced by anticipation in her award, supposing that she should plant me in the very rear-ward of her favour, as No. 199 + 1. Most truly I loved this beautiful and ingenuous girl; and had it not been for the Bath mail, timing all courtships by post-office allowance, heaven only knows what might have come of it. People talk of being over head and ears in love; now, the mail was the cause that I sank only over ears in love, which, you know, still left a trifle of brain to overlook the whole conduct of the affair.

XVIII. Ah, reader! when I look back upon those days, it seems to me that all things change—all things perish. "Perish the roses and the palms of kings": perish even the crowns and trophies of Waterloo: thunder and lightning are not the thunder and lightning which I remember. Roses are degenerating. The Fannies of our island—though this I say with reluctance—are not visibly improving; and the Bath road is notoriously superannuated. Crocodiles, you will say, are stationary. Mr. Waterton tells me that the crocodile does *not* change; that a cayman, in fact, or an alligator, is just as good for riding upon as he was in the time of the Pharaohs. *That* may be; but the reason is that the crocodile does not live fast—he is a slow coach. I believe it is gener-

<sup>1</sup> "*Turrets*":—As one who loves and venerates Chaucer for his unrivalled merits of tenderness, of picturesque characterisation, and of narrative skill, I noticed with great pleasure that the word *torrettes* is used by him to designate the little devices through which the reins are made to pass. This same word, in the same exact sense, I heard uniformly used by many scores of illustrious mail-coachmen, to whose confidential friendship I had the honour of being admitted in my younger days.

ally understood among naturalists, that the crocodile is a blockhead. It is my own impression that the Pharaohs were also blockheads. Now, as the Pharaohs and the crocodile domineered over Egyptian society, this accounts for a singular mistake that prevailed through innumerable generations on the Nile. The crocodile made the ridiculous blunder of supposing man to be meant chiefly for his own eating. Man, taking a different view of the subject, naturally met that mistake by another : he viewed the crocodile as a thing sometimes to worship, but always to run away from. And this continued till Mr. Waterton<sup>1</sup> changed the relations between the animals. The mode of escaping from the reptile he showed to be, not by running away, but by leaping on its back, booted and spurred. The two animals had misunderstood each other. The use of the crocodile has now been cleared up — viz., to be ridden ; and the final cause of man is, that he may improve the health of the crocodile by riding him a fox-hunting before breakfast. And it is pretty certain that any crocodile, who has been regularly hunted through the season, and is master of the weight he carries, will take a six-barred gate now as well as ever he would have done in the infancy of the pyramids.

XIX. If, therefore, the crocodile does *not* change, all things else undeniably *do* : even the shadow of the pyramids grows less. And often the restoration in vision of Fanny and the Bath road, makes me too pathetically sensible of that truth. Out of the darkness, if I happen to call back the image of Fanny, up rises suddenly from a gulf of forty years a rose in

<sup>1</sup> “*Mr. Waterton*” :— Had the reader lived through the last generation, he would not need to be told that, some thirty or thirty-five years back, Mr. Waterton, a distinguished country gentleman of ancient family in Northumberland, publicly mounted and rode in top-boots a savage old crocodile, that was restive and very impertinent, but all to no purpose. The crocodile jibbed and tried to kick, but vainly. He was no more able to throw the squire, than Sinbad was to throw the old scoundrel who used his back without paying for it, until he discovered a mode (slightly immoral, perhaps, though some think not) of murdering the old fraudulent jockey, and so circuitously of unhorsing him.

June ; or, if I think for an instant of the rose in June, up rises the heavenly face of Fanny. One after the other, like the antiphonies in the choral service, rise Fanny and the rose in June, then back again the rose in June and Fanny. Then come both together, as in a chorus — roses and Fannies, Fannies and roses, without end, thick as blossoms in paradise. Then comes a venerable crocodile, in a royal livery of scarlet and gold, with sixteen capes ; and the crocodile is driving four-in-hand from the box of the Bath mail. And suddenly we upon the mail are pulled up by a mighty dial, sculptured with the hours, that mingle with the heavens and the heavenly host. Then all at once we are arrived at Marlborough forest, amongst the lovely households<sup>1</sup> of the roe-deer ; the deer and their fawns retire into the dewy thickets ; the thickets are rich with roses ; once again the roses call up the sweet countenance of Fanny ; and she, being the granddaughter of a crocodile, awakens a dreadful host of semi-legendary animals — griffins, dragons, basilisks, sphinxes — till at length the whole vision of fighting images crowds into one towering armorial shield, a vast emblazonry of human charities and human loveliness that have perished, but quartered heraldically with unutterable and demoniac natures, whilst over all rises, as a surmounting crest, one fair female hand, with the forefinger pointing, in sweet, sorrowful admonition, upwards to heaven, where is sculptured the eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth and her children.

#### GOING DOWN WITH VICTORY.

XX. But the grandest chapter of our experience, within the whole mail-coach service, was on those occasions when we

<sup>1</sup> “ *Housholds* ” : — Roe-deer do not congregate in herds like the fallow or the red deer, but by separate families, parents and children ; which feature of approximation to the sanctity of human hearths, added to their comparatively miniature and graceful proportions, conciliate to them an interest of peculiar tenderness, supposing even that this beautiful creature is less characteristically impressed with the grandeurs of savage and forest life.

went down from London with the news of victory. A period of about ten years stretched from Trafalgar to Waterloo; the second and third years of which period (1806 and 1807) were comparatively sterile; but the other nine (from 1805 to 1815 inclusively) furnished a long succession of victories; the least of which, in such a contest of Titans, had an inappreciable value of position — partly for its absolute interference with the plans of our enemy, but still more from its keeping alive through central Europe the sense of a deep-seated vulnerability in France. Even to tease the coasts of our enemy, to mortify them by continual blockades, to insult them by capturing if it were but a baubling schooner under the eyes of their arrogant armies, repeated from time to time a sullen proclamation of power lodged in one quarter to which the hopes of Christendom turned in secret. How much more loudly must this proclamation have spoken in the audacity<sup>1</sup> of having bearded the *élite* of their troops, and having beaten them in pitched battles! Five years of life it was worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place on a mail-coach, when carrying down the first tidings of any such event. And it is to be noted that, from our insular situation, and the multitude of our frigates disposable for the rapid transmission of intelligence, rarely did any unauthorised rumour steal away a prelibation from the first aroma of the regular despatches. The government news was generally the earliest news.

<sup>1</sup> “*Audacity*”: — Such the French accounted it; and it has struck me that Soult would not have been so popular in London, at the period of her present Majesty’s coronation, or in Manchester, on occasion of his visit to that town, if they had been aware of the insolence with which he spoke of us in notes written at intervals from the field of Waterloo. As though it had been mere felony in our army to look a French one in the face, he said in more notes than one, dated from two to four P. M. on the field of Waterloo, “Here are the English — we have them; they are caught *en flagrant délit*.” Yet no man should have known us better; no man had drunk deeper from the cup of humiliation than Soult had in 1809, when ejected by us with headlong violence from Oporto, and pursued through a long line of wrecks to the frontier of Spain; subsequently at Albuera, in the bloodiest of recorded battles, to say nothing of Toulouse, he should have learned our pretensions.

XXI. From eight P. M. to fifteen or twenty minutes later, imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street; where, at that time,<sup>1</sup> and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post-office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember; but, from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity — but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses — were what might first have fixed the attention. Every carriage, on every morning in the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination — wheels, axles, linchpins, pole, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much rigour as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. But the night before us is a night of victory; and, behold! to the ordinary display, what a heart-shaking addition! — horses, men, carriages, all are dressed in laurels and flowers, oak-leaves and ribbons. The guards, as being officially his Majesty's servants, and of the coachmen such as are within the privilege of the post-office, wear the royal liveries of course; and as it is summer (for all the *land* victories were naturally won in summer), they wear, on this fine evening, these liveries exposed to view, without any covering of upper coats. Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of the laurels in their hats, dilate their hearts, by giving to them openly a personal connection with the great news, in which already they have the general interest of patriotism. That great national sentiment surmounts and quells all sense of ordinary distinctions. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now hardly to be distinguished as such except by dress; for the usual reserve of their man-

<sup>1</sup> “*At that time*”: — I speak of the era previous to Waterloo.



ner in speaking to the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one glory, connects every man by the transcendent bond of his national blood. The spectators, who are numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by continual hurrahs. Every moment are shouted aloud by the post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years — Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen — expressing the grandeur of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir! — what sea-like ferment! — what a thundering of wheels! — what a trampling of hoofs! — what a sounding of trumpets! — what farewell cheers! — what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation, connecting the name of the particular mail — “Liverpool for ever!” — with the name of the particular victory — “Badajoz for ever!” or “Salamanca for ever!” The half-slumbering consciousness that, all night long, and all the next day — perhaps for even a longer period — many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gunpowder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy, has an obscure effect of multiplying the victory itself, by multiplying to the imagination into infinity the stages of its progressive diffusion. A fiery arrow seems to be let loose, which from that moment is destined to travel, without intermission, westwards for three hundred<sup>1</sup> miles —

<sup>1</sup> “*Three hundred*”: — Of necessity, this scale of measurement, to an American, if he happens to be a thoughtless man, must sound ludicrous. Accordingly, I remember a case in which an American writer indulges himself in the luxury of a little fibbing, by ascribing to an Englishman a

northwards for six hundred ; and the sympathy of our Lombard Street friends at parting is exalted a hundredfold by a sort of visionary sympathy with the yet slumbering sympathies which in so vast a succession we are going to awake.

XXII. Liberated from the embarrassments of the city, and issuing into the broad uncrowded avenues of the northern suburbs, we soon begin to enter upon our natural pace of ten miles an hour. In the broad light of the summer evening, the sun, perhaps, only just at the point of setting, we are seen from every storey of every house. Heads of every age crowd to the windows — young and old understand the language of our victorious symbols — and rolling volleys of sympathising cheers run along us, behind us, and before us. The beggar, rearing himself against the wall, forgets his lameness — real

pompous account of the Thames, constructed entirely upon American ideas of grandeur, and concluding in something like these terms:— “ And, sir, arriving at London, this mighty father of rivers attains a breadth of at least two furlongs, having, in its winding course, traversed the astonishing distance of one hundred and seventy miles.” And this the candid American thinks it fair to contrast with the scale of the Mississippi. Now, it is hardly worth while to answer a pure fiction gravely, else one might say that no Englishman out of Bedlam ever thought of looking in an island for the rivers of a continent ; nor, consequently, could have thought of looking for the peculiar grandeur of the Thames in the length of its course, or in the extent of soil which it drains ; yet, if he *had* been so absurd, the American might have recollected that a river, not to be compared with the Thames even as to volume of water—viz., the Tiber—has contrived to make itself heard of in this world for twenty-five centuries to an extent not reached as yet by any river, however corpulent, of his own land. The glory of the Thames is measured by the destiny of the population to which it ministers, by the commerce which it supports, by the grandeur of the empire in which, though far from the largest, it is the most influential stream. Upon some such scale, and not by a transfer of Columbian standards, is the course of our English mails to be valued. The American may fancy the effect of his own valuations to our English ears, by supposing the case of a Siberian glorifying his country in these terms :— “ These wretches, sir, in France and England, cannot march half a mile in any direction without finding a house where food can be had and lodging ; whereas, such is the noble desolation of our magnificent country, that in many a direction for a thousand miles, I will engage that a dog shall not find shelter from a snow-storm, nor a wren find an apology for breakfast.”

or assumed — thinks not of his whining trade, but stands erect, with bold exulting smiles, as we pass him. The victory has healed him, and says, Be thou whole! Women and children, from garrets alike and cellars, through infinite London, look down or look up with loving eyes upon our gay ribbons and our martial laurels; sometimes kiss their hands; sometimes hang out, as signals of affection, pocket-handkerchiefs, aprons, dusters, anything that, by catching the summer breezes, will express an aerial jubilation. On the London side of Barnet, to which we draw near within a few minutes after nine, observe that private carriage which is approaching us. The weather being so warm, the glasses are all down; and one may read, as on the stage of a theatre, everything that goes on within. It contains three ladies — one likely to be “mamma,” and two of seventeen or eighteen, who are probably her daughters. What lovely animation, what beautiful unpremeditated pantomime, explaining to us every syllable that passes, in these ingenuous girls! By the sudden start and raising of the hands on first discovering our laurelled equipage! — by the sudden movement and appeal to the elder lady from both of them — and by the heightened colour on their animated countenances, we can almost hear them saying, “See, see! Look at their laurels! Oh, mamma! there has been a great battle in Spain; and it has been a great victory.” In a moment we are on the point of passing them. We passengers — I on the box, and the two on the roof behind me — raise our hats to the ladies; the coachman makes his professional salute with the whip; the guard even, though punctilious on the matter of his dignity as an officer under the crown, touches his hat. The ladies move to us, in return, with a winning graciousness of gesture; all smile on each side in a way that nobody could misunderstand, and that nothing short of a grand national sympathy could so instantaneously prompt. Will these ladies say that we are nothing to *them*? Oh, no; they will not say *that*. They cannot deny — they do not deny — that for this night they are our sisters; gentle or simple, scholar or illiterate servant, for

twelve hours to come, we on the outside have the honour to be their brothers. Those poor women, again, who stop to gaze upon us with delight at the entrance of Barnet, and seem, by their air of weariness, to be returning from labour — do you mean to say that they are washerwomen and charwomen? Oh, my poor friend, you are quite mistaken. I assure you they stand in a far higher rank; for this one night they feel themselves by birth-right to be daughters of England, and answer to no humbler title.

XXIII. Every joy, however, even rapturous joy — such is the sad law of earth — may carry with it grief, or fear of grief, to some. Three miles beyond Barnet, we see approaching us another private carriage, nearly repeating the circumstances of the former case. Here, also, the glasses are all down — here, also, is an elderly lady seated; but the two daughters are missing; for the single young person sitting by the lady's side, seems to be an attendant — so I judge from her dress, and her air of respectful reserve. The lady is in mourning; and her countenance expresses sorrow. At first she does not look up; so that I believe she is not aware of our approach, until she hears the measured beating of our horses' hoofs. Then she raises her eyes to settle them painfully on our triumphal equipage. Our decorations explain the case to her at once; but she beholds them with apparent anxiety, or even with terror. Some time before this, I, finding it difficult to hit a flying mark when embarrassed by the coachman's person and reins intervening, had given to the guard a "Courier" evening paper, containing the gazette, for the next carriage that might pass. Accordingly he tossed it in, so folded that the huge capitals expressing some such legend as — GLORIOUS VICTORY, might catch the eye at once. To see the paper, however, at all, interpreted as it was by our ensigns of triumph, explained everything; and, if the guard were right in thinking the lady to have received it with a gesture of horror, it could not be doubtful that she had suffered some deep personal affliction in connection with this Spanish war.

XXIV. Here, now, was the case of one who, having formerly

suffered, might, erroneously perhaps, be distressing herself with anticipations of another similar suffering. That same night, and hardly three hours later, occurred the reverse case. A poor woman, who too probably would find herself, in a day or two, to have suffered the heaviest of afflictions by the battle, blindly allowed herself to express an exultation so unmeasured in the news and its details, as gave to her the appearance which amongst Celtic Highlanders is called *féy*. This was at some little town where we changed horses an hour or two after midnight. Some fair or wake had kept the people up out of their beds, and had occasioned a partial illumination of the stalls and booths, presenting an unusual but very impressive effect. We saw many lights moving about as we drew near; and perhaps the most striking scene on the whole route was our reception at this place. The flashing of torches and the beautiful radiance of blue lights (technically, Bengal lights) upon the heads of our horses; the fine effect of such a showery and ghostly illumination falling upon our flowers and glittering laurels<sup>1</sup>; whilst all around ourselves, that formed a centre of light, the darkness gathered on the rear and flanks in massy blackness; these optical splendours, together with the prodigious enthusiasm of the people, composed a picture at once scenical and affecting, theatrical and holy. As we stayed for three or four minutes, I alighted; and immediately from a dismantled stall in the street, where no doubt she had been presiding through the earlier part of the night, advanced eagerly a middle-aged woman. The sight of my newspaper it was that had drawn her attention upon myself. The victory which we were carrying down to the provinces on *this* occasion, was the imperfect one of Talavera — imperfect for its results, such was the virtual treachery of the Spanish general, Cuesta, but not imperfect in its ever-memorable heroism. I told her the main outline of the battle. The agitation of her enthusiasm had been so conspicuous when listening, and when first

<sup>1</sup> “*Glittering laurels*”: — I must observe, that the colour of *green* suffers almost a spiritual change and exaltation under the effect of Bengal lights.

applying for information, that I could not but ask her if she had not some relative in the Peninsular army. Oh, yes; her only son was there. In what regiment? He was a trooper in the 23d Dragoons. My heart sank within me as she made that answer. This sublime regiment, which an Englishman should never mention without raising his hat to their memory, had made the most memorable and effective charge recorded in military annals. They leaped their horses — *over* a trench where they could, *into* it, and with the result of death or mutilation, when they could *not*. What proportion cleared the trench is nowhere stated. Those who *did*, closed up and went down upon the enemy with such divinity of fervour (I use the word *divinity* by design: the inspiration of God must have prompted this movement to those whom even then He was calling to His presence), that two results followed. As regarded the enemy, this 23d Dragoons, not, I believe, originally three hundred and fifty strong, paralysed a French column, six thousand strong, then ascended the hill, and fixed the gaze of the whole French army. As regarded themselves, the 23d were supposed at first to have been barely not annihilated; but eventually, I believe, about one in four survived. And this, then, was the regiment — a regiment already for some hours glorified and hallowed to the ear of all London, as lying stretched, by a large majority, upon one bloody aceldama — in which the young trooper served whose mother was now talking in a spirit of such joyous enthusiasm. Did I tell her the truth? Had I the heart to break up her dreams? No. To-morrow, said I to myself — to-morrow, or the next day, will publish the worst. For one night more, wherefore should she not sleep in peace? After to-morrow, the chances are too many that peace will forsake her pillow. This brief respite, then, let her owe to *my* gift and *my* forbearance. But, if I told her not of the bloody price that had been paid, not, therefore, was I silent on the contributions from her son's regiment to that day's service and glory. I showed her not the funeral banners under which the noble regiment was sleeping. I lifted not the overshadowing laurels from the

bloody trench in which horse and rider lay mangled together. But I told her how these dear children of England, officers and privates, had leaped their horses over all obstacles as gaily as hunters to the morning's chase. I told her how they rode their horses into the mists of death (saying to myself, but not saying to *her*), and laid down their young lives for thee, O mother England! as willingly — poured out their noble blood as cheerfully — as ever, after a long day's sport, when infants, they had rested their wearied heads upon their mother's knees, or had sunk to sleep in her arms. Strange it is, yet true, that she seemed to have no fears for her son's safety, even after this knowledge that the 23d Dragoons had been memorably engaged; but so much was she enraptured by the knowledge that *his* regiment, and therefore that *he*, had rendered conspicuous service in the dreadful conflict — a service which had actually made them, within the last twelve hours, the foremost topic of conversation in London — so absolutely was fear swallowed up in joy — that, in the mere simplicity of her fervent nature, the poor woman threw her arms round my neck, as she thought of her son, and gave to *me* the kiss which secretly was meant for *him*.

#### SECTION THE SECOND. — THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH.

XXV. What is to be taken as the predominant opinion of man, reflective and philosophic, upon SUDDEN DEATH? It is remarkable that, in different conditions of society, sudden death has been variously regarded as the consummation of an earthly career most fervently to be desired, or, again, as that consummation which is with most horror to be deprecated. Cæsar the Dictator, at his last dinner party (*cena*), on the very evening before his assassination, when the minutes of his earthly career were numbered, being asked what death in *his* judgment, might be pronounced the most eligible, replied, "That which should be most sudden." On the other hand, the divine Litany of our English Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character, for

the whole human race prostrate before God, places such a death in the very van of horrors :—“From lightning and tempest ; from plague, pestilence, and famine ; from battle and murder, and from SUDDEN DEATH — *Good Lord, deliver us.*” Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities ; it is ranked among the last of curses ; and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it was ranked as the first of blessings. In that difference, most readers will see little more than the essential difference between Christianity and Paganism. But this, on consideration, I doubt. The Christian Church may be right in its estimate of sudden death ; and it is a natural feeling, though after all it may also be an infirm one, to wish for a quiet dismissal from life — as that which *seems* most reconcilable with meditation, with penitential retrospects, and with the humilities of farewell prayer. There does not, however, occur to me any direct scriptural warrant for this earnest petition of the English Litany, unless under a special construction of the word “sudden.” It seems a petition — indulged rather and conceded to human infirmity, than exacted from human piety. It is not so much a doctrine built upon the eternities of the Christian system, as a plausible opinion built upon special varieties of physical temperament. Let that, however, be as it may, two remarks suggest themselves as prudent restraints upon a doctrine, which else *may* wander, and *has* wandered, into an uncharitable superstition. The first is this : that many people are likely to exaggerate the horror of a sudden death, from the disposition to lay a false stress upon words or acts, simply because by an accident they have become *final* words or acts. If a man dies, for instance, by some sudden death when he happens to be intoxicated, such a death is falsely regarded with peculiar horror ; as though the intoxication were suddenly exalted into a blasphemy. But *that* is unphilosophic. The man was, or he was not, *habitually* a drunkard. If not, if his intoxication were a solitary accident, there can be no reason for allowing special emphasis to this act, simply because through misfortune it became his final act. Nor, on



the other hand, if it were no accident, but one of his *habitual* transgressions, will it be the more habitual or the more a transgression, because some sudden calamity, surprising him, has caused this habitual transgression to be also a final one. Could the man have had any reason even dimly to foresee his own sudden death, there would have been a new feature in his act of intemperance — a feature of presumption and irreverence, as in one that, having known himself drawing near to the presence of God, should have suited his demeanour to an expectation so awful. But this is no part of the case supposed. And the only new element in the man's act is not any element of special immorality, but simply of special misfortune.

XXVI. The other remark has reference to the meaning of the word *sudden*. Very possibly Cæsar and the Christian Church do not differ in the way supposed; that is, do not differ by any difference of doctrine as between Pagan and Christian views of the moral temper appropriate to death, but perhaps they are contemplating different cases. Both contemplate a violent death, a *βιαιθάνατος* — death that is *βιαίος*, or, in other words, death that is brought about, not by internal and spontaneous change, but by active force having its origin from without. In this meaning the two authorities agree. Thus far they are in harmony. But the difference is, that the Roman by the word “sudden” means *unlingering*; whereas the Christian Litany by “sudden death” means a death *without warning*, consequently without any available summons to religious preparation. The poor mutineer, who kneels down to gather into his heart the bullets from twelve firelocks of his pitying comrades, dies by a most sudden death in Cæsar's sense; one shock, one mighty spasm, one (possibly *not* one) groan, and all is over. But, in the sense of the Litany, the mutineer's death is far from sudden; his offence originally, his imprisonment, his trial, the interval between his sentence and its execution, having all furnished him with separate warnings of his fate — having all summoned him to meet it with solemn preparation.

XXVII. Here at once, in this sharp verbal distinction, we comprehend the faithful earnestness with which a holy Christian Church pleads on behalf of her poor departing children, that God would vouchsafe to them the last great privilege and distinction possible on a death-bed — viz., the opportunity of untroubled preparation for facing this mighty trial. Sudden death, as a mere variety in the modes of dying, where death in some shape is inevitable, proposes a question of choice which, equally in the Roman and the Christian sense, will be variously answered according to each man's variety of temperament. Meantime, one aspect of sudden death there is, one modification, upon which no doubt can arise, that of all martyrdoms it is the most agitating — viz., where it surprises a man under circumstances which offer (or which seem to offer) some hurrying, flying, inappreciably minute chance of evading it. Sudden as the danger which it affronts, must be any effort by which such an evasion can be accomplished. Even *that*, even the sickening necessity for hurrying in extremity where all hurry seems destined to be vain, even that anguish is liable to a hideous exasperation in one particular case, — viz., where the appeal is made not exclusively to the instinct of self-preservation, but to the conscience, on behalf of some other life besides your own, accidentally thrown upon *your* protection. To fail, to collapse in a service merely your own, might seem comparatively venial; though, in fact, it is far from venial. But to fail in a case where Providence has suddenly thrown into your hands the final interests of another — a fellow-creature shuddering between the gates of life and death; this, to a man of apprehensive conscience, would mingle the misery of an atrocious criminality with the misery of a bloody calamity. You are called upon, by the case supposed, possibly to die; but to die at the very moment when, by any even partial failure, or effeminate collapse of your energies, you will be self-denounced as a murderer. You had but the twinkling of an eye for your effort, and that effort might have been unavailing; but to have risen to the level of such an effort, would have rescued you, though not from

dying, yet from dying as a traitor to your final and farewell duty.

XXVIII. The situation here contemplated exposes a dreadful ulcer, lurking far down in the depths of human nature. It is not that men generally are summoned to face such awful trials. But potentially, and in shadowy outline, such a trial is moving subterraneously in perhaps all men's natures. Upon the secret mirror of our dreams such a trial is darkly projected, perhaps, to every one of us. That dream, so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and, through languishing prostration in hope and the energies of hope, that constant sequel of lying down before the lion, publishes the secret frailty of human nature—reveals its deep-seated falsehood to itself—records its abysmal treachery. Perhaps not one of us escapes that dream; perhaps, as by some sorrowful doom of man, that dream repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation in Eden. Every one of us, in this dream, has a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will; once again a snare is presented for tempting him into captivity to a luxury of ruin; once again, as in aboriginal Paradise, the man falls by his own choice; again, by infinite iteration, the ancient earth groans to Heaven, through her secret caves, over the weakness of her child: "Nature, from her seat, sighing through all her works," again "gives signs of wo that all is lost"; and again the counter sigh is repeated to the sorrowing heavens for the endless rebellion against God. It is not without probability that in the world of dreams every one of us ratifies for himself the original transgression. In dreams, perhaps under some secret conflict of the midnight sleeper, lighted up to the consciousness at the time, but darkened to the memory as soon as all is finished, each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the treason of the aboriginal fall.

XXIX. The incident, so memorable in itself by its features of horror, and so scenical by its grouping for the eye, which

furnished the text for this reverie upon *Sudden Death*, occurred to myself in the dead of night, as a solitary spectator, when seated on the box of the Manchester and Glasgow mail, in the second or third summer after Waterloo. I find it necessary to relate the circumstances, because they are such as could not have occurred unless under a singular combination of accidents. In those days, the oblique and lateral communications with many rural post-offices were so arranged, either through necessity or through defect of system, as to make it requisite for the main north-western mail (*i. e.*, the *down* mail), on reaching Manchester, to halt for a number of hours; how many, I do not remember; six or seven, I think; but the result was, that, in the ordinary course, the mail recommenced its journey northwards about midnight. Wearied with the long detention at a gloomy hotel, I walked out about eleven o'clock at night for the sake of fresh air; meaning to fall in with the mail and resume my seat at the post-office. The night, however, being yet dark, as the moon had scarcely risen, and the streets being at that hour empty, so as to offer no opportunities for asking the road, I lost my way; and did not reach the post-office until it was considerably past midnight; but, to my great relief (as it was important for me to be in Westmoreland by the morning), I saw in the huge saucer eyes of the mail, blazing through the gloom, an evidence that my chance was not yet lost. Past the time it was; but, by some rare accident, the mail was not even yet ready to start. I ascended to my seat on the box, where my cloak was still lying as it had lain at the Bridgewater Arms. I had left it there in imitation of a nautical discoverer, who leaves a bit of bunting on the shore of his discovery, by way of warning off the ground the whole human race, and notifying to the Christian and the heathen worlds, with his best compliments, that he has hoisted his pocket-handkerchief once and for ever upon that virgin soil; thenceforward claiming the *jus dominii* to the top of the atmosphere above it, and also the right of driving shafts to the centre of the earth below it; so that all people found after this warning, either

aloft in upper chambers of the atmosphere, or groping in subterraneous shafts, or squatting audaciously on the surface of the soil, will be treated as trespassers—kicked, that is to say, or decapitated, as circumstances may suggest, by their very faithful servant, the owner of the said pocket-handkerchief. In the present case, it is probable that my cloak might not have been respected, and the *jus gentium* might have been cruelly violated in my person—for, in the dark, people commit deeds of darkness, gas being a great ally of morality—but it so happened that, on this night, there was no other outside passenger; and thus the crime, which else was but too probable, missed fire for want of a criminal.

XXX. Having mounted the box, I took a small quantity of laudanum, having already travelled two hundred and fifty miles—viz., from a point seventy miles beyond London. In the taking of laudanum there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident it drew upon me the special attention of my assessor on the box, the coachman. And in *that* also there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident, and with great delight, it drew my own attention to the fact that this coachman was a monster in point of bulk, and that he had but one eye. In fact, he had been foretold by Virgil as

“Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum.”

He answered to the conditions in every one of the items:—  
1. a monster he was; 2. dreadful; 3. shapeless; 4. huge; 5. who had lost an eye. But why should *that* delight me? Had he been one of the Calenders in the “Arabian Nights,” and had paid down his eye as the price of his criminal curiosity, what right had *I* to exult in his misfortune? I did *not* exult: I delighted in no man’s punishment, though it were even merited. But these personal distinctions (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) identified in an instant an old friend of mine, whom I had known in the south for some years as the most masterly of mail-coachmen. He was the man in all Europe that could (if *any* could) have driven six-in-hand full gallop over *Al*

*Sirat* — that dreadful bridge of Mahomet, with no side battlements, and of *extra* room not enough for a razor's edge — leading right across the bottomless gulf. Under this eminent man, whom in Greek I cognominated Cyclops *diphrelates* (Cyclops the charioteer), I, and others known to me, studied the diphrelatic art. Excuse, reader, a word too elegant to be pedantic. As a pupil, though I paid extra fees, it is to be lamented that I did not stand high in his esteem. It showed his dogged honesty (though, observe, not his discernment), that he could not see my merits. Let us excuse his absurdity in this particular, by remembering his want of an eye. Doubtless *that* made him blind to my merits. In the art of conversation, however, he admitted that I had the whip-hand of him. On this present occasion, great joy was at our meeting. But what was Cyclops doing here? Had the medical men recommended northern air, or how? I collected, from such explanations as he volunteered, that he had an interest at stake in some suit-at-law now pending at Lancaster; so that probably he had got himself transferred to this station, for the purpose of connecting with his professional pursuits an instant readiness for the calls of his lawsuit.

XXXI. Meantime, what are we stopping for? Surely we have now waited long enough. Oh, this procrastinating mail, and this procrastinating post-office! Can't they take a lesson upon that subject from *me*? Some people have called *me* procrastinating. Yet you are witness, reader, that I was here kept waiting for the post-office. Will the post-office lay its hand on its heart, in its moments of sobriety, and assert that ever it waited for me? What are they about? The guard tells me that there is a large extra accumulation of foreign mails this night, owing to irregularities caused by war, by wind, by weather, in the packet service, which as yet does not benefit at all by steam. For an *extra* hour, it seems, the post-office has been engaged in threshing out the pure wheaten correspondence of Glasgow, and winnowing it from the chaff of all baser intermediate towns. But at last all is finished. Sound your horn, guard. Manchester, good-by; we've lost

an hour by your criminal conduct at the post-office : which, however, though I do not mean to part with a serviceable ground of complaint, and one which really *is* such for the horses, to me secretly is an advantage, since it compels us to look sharply for this lost hour amongst the next eight or nine, and to recover it (if we can) at the rate of one mile extra per hour. Off we are at last, and at eleven miles an hour ; and for the moment I detect no changes in the energy or in the skill of Cyclops.

XXXII. From Manchester to Kendal, which virtually (though not in law) is the capital of Westmoreland, there were at this time seven stages of eleven miles each. The first five of these, counting from Manchester, terminate in Lancaster, which is therefore fifty-five miles north of Manchester, and the same distance exactly from Liverpool. The first three stages terminate in Preston (called, by way of distinction from other towns of that name, *proud* Preston), at which place it is that the separate roads from Liverpool and from Manchester to the north become confluent.<sup>1</sup> Within these first three stages lay the foundation, the progress, and termination of our night's adventure. During the first stage, I found out that Cyclops was mortal : he was liable to the shocking affection of sleep — a thing which previously I had never suspected. If a man indulges in the vicious habit of sleeping, all the skill in auri-gation of Apollo himself, with the horses of Aurora to execute his notions, avails him nothing. “Oh, Cyclops !” I exclaimed, “thou art mortal. My friend, thou snoorest.” Through the first eleven miles, however, this infirmity — which I grieve to say that he shared with the whole Pagan Pantheon — betrayed itself only by brief snatches. On waking up, he made an

1 “*Confluent*” : — Suppose a capital Y (the Pythagorean letter) : Lancaster is at the foot of this letter ; Liverpool at the top of the *right* branch ; Manchester at the top of the *left* ; proud Preston at the centre, where the two branches unite. It is thirty-three miles along either of the two branches ; it is twenty-two miles along the stem — viz., from Preston in the middle, to Lancaster at the root. There's a lesson in geography for the reader. °

apology for himself, which, instead of mending matters, laid open a gloomy vista of coming disasters. The summer assizes, he reminded me, were now going on at Lancaster : in consequence of which, for three nights and three days, he had not lain down in a bed. During the day, he was waiting for his own summons as a witness on the trial in which he was interested ; or else, lest he should be missing at the critical moment, was drinking with the other witnesses, under the pastoral surveillance of the attorneys. During the night, or that part of it which at sea would form the middle watch, he was driving. This explanation certainly accounted for his drowsiness, but in a way which made it much more alarming ; since now, after several days' resistance to this infirmity, at length he was steadily giving way. Throughout the second stage he grew more and more drowsy. In the second mile of the third stage, he surrendered himself finally and without a struggle to his perilous temptation. All his past resistance had but deepened the weight of this final oppression. Seven atmospheres of sleep rested upon him ; and to consummate the case, our worthy guard, after singing "Love amongst the Roses" for perhaps thirty times, without invitation, and without applause, had in revenge moodily resigned himself to slumber — not so deep, doubtless, as the coachman's, but deep enough for mischief. And thus at last, about ten miles from Preston, it came about that I found myself left in charge of his Majesty's London and Glasgow mail, then running at the least twelve miles an hour.

XXXIII. What made this negligence less criminal than else it must have been thought, was the condition of the roads at night during the assizes. At that time, all the law business of populous Liverpool, and also of populous Manchester, with its vast cincture of populous rural districts, was called up by ancient usage to the tribunal of Lilliputian Lancaster. To break up this old traditional usage required, 1. a conflict with powerful established interests ; 2. a large system of new arrangements ; and 3. a new parliamentary statute. But as yet this change was merely in contemplation. As things were at



present, twice in the year<sup>1</sup> so vast a body of business rolled northwards, from the southern quarter of the county, that for a fortnight at least it occupied the severe exertions of two judges in its despatch. The consequence of this was, that every horse available for such a service, along the whole line of road, was exhausted in carrying down the multitudes of people who were parties to the different suits. By sunset, therefore, it usually happened that, through utter exhaustion amongst men and horses, the road sank into profound silence. Except the exhaustion in the vast adjacent county of York from a contested election, no such silence succeeding to no such fiery uproar was ever witnessed in England.

XXXIV. On this occasion the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. For my own part, though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, I had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was August, in the middle of which lay my own birth-day — a festival to every thoughtful man suggesting solemn and often sigh-born<sup>2</sup> thoughts. The county was my own native county — upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the original curse of labour in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies only of men as of slaves, or criminals in mines, but working through the fiery will. Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put forth daily. At this particular season also of the assizes that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a

<sup>1</sup> “*Twice in the year*”: — There were at that time only two assizes even in the most populous counties — viz., the Lent Assizes, and the Summer Assizes.

<sup>2</sup> “*Sigh-born*”: — I owe the suggestion of this word to an obscure remembrance of a beautiful phrase in “Giraldus Cambrensis” — viz., *suspiriosæ cogitationes*.

stranger, which swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly subsiding back into silence about sunset, could not fail (when united with this permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citadel of labour) to point the thoughts pathetically upon that counter vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, towards which, as to their secret haven, the profounder aspirations of man's heart are in solitude continually travelling. Obliquely upon our left we were nearing the sea, which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore each an orchestral part in this universal lull. Moonlight, and the first timid tremblings of the dawn, were by this time blending; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses, which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made but little disturbance, there was no sound abroad. In the clouds, and on the earth, prevailed the same majestic peace; and in spite of all that the villain of a schoolmaster has done for the ruin of our sublimer thoughts, which are the thoughts of our infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with our false feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still believe, and must for ever believe, in fields of air traversing the total gulf between earth and the central heavens. Still, in the confidence of children that tread without fear *every* chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in that Sabbatic vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth upwards to the sandals of God.

XXXV. Suddenly, from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe; but then it died away. Once roused, however, I could not

but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion ; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is, that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for *action*. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have, as regards *thought*, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution ; in the radix of the series I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion ; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. *Us*, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision. And I had ridden through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter to look back upon, the first face of which was horror — the parting face a jest, for any anxiety to rest upon *our* interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray *me* who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then, it may be said, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side ; and two wrongs might make a right. *That* was not likely. The same motive which had drawn *us* to the right-hand side of the road — viz., the luxury of the soft beaten sand as contrasted with the paved centre — would prove attractive to others.\* The two adverse carriages would therefore, to a certainty, be travelling on the same side ; and from this side, as not being ours in law, the crossing over to the other would, of course, be looked for from *us*.<sup>1</sup> Our lamps, still lighted, would

<sup>1</sup> It is true that, according to the law of the case as established by legal precedents, all carriages were required to give way before Royal equipages, and therefore before the mail as one of them. But this only increased the

give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us, would rely upon *us* for quartering.<sup>1</sup> All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw, not discursively, or by effort, or by succession, but by one flash of horrid simultaneous intuition.

XXXVI. Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which *might* be gathering ahead, ah ! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of wo, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard ! A whisper it was — a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off — secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable ; that, being known, was not, therefore, healed. What could be done — who was it that could do it — to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses ? Could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman ? You, reader, think that it would have been in *your* power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. Easy, was it ? See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Easy, was it ? Unhorse me, then, that imperial rider ; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

XXXVII. The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be ? Was it industry in a taxed cart ? Was it youthful gaiety in a gig ? Was it sorrow that loitered, or joy that raced ? For as yet the snatches of sound were too intermitting, from distance, to decipher the character of the motion. Whoever were the travellers, something must be done to warn them.

danger, as being a regulation very imperfectly made known, very unequally enforced, and therefore often embarrassing the movements on both sides.

<sup>1</sup> “ *Quartering* ” : — This is the technical word, and, I presume, derived from the French *cartayer*, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon *us* — and, wo is me ! that *us* was reduced to my frail opium-shattered self — rests the responsibility of warning. Yet, how should this be accomplished ? Might I not sound the guard's horn ? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the accident which I have mentioned, of the foreign mails' being piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us that final stage where the collision must be accomplished, and the catastrophe sealed. All was apparently finished. The court was sitting ; the case was heard ; the judge had finished ; and only the verdict was yet in arrear.

XXXVIII. Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length ; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light ; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the further end of this Gothic aisle, a frail reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and by his side a young lady. Ah, young sir ! what are you about ? If it is requisite that you should whisper your communications to this young lady — though really I see nobody, at an hour and on a road so solitary, likely to overhear you — is it therefore requisite that you should carry your lips forward to hers ? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour ; and the parties within it being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a-half. Oh heavens ! what is it that I shall do ? Speaking or acting, what help can I offer ? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the “*Iliad*” to prompt the sole resource that remained. Yet

so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles, and its effect. But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas? No: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant; such a shout would suffice as might carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and one gig-horse. I shouted — and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted — and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

XXXIX. Here, then, all had been done that, by me, *could* be done: more on *my* part was not possible. Mine had been the first step; the second was for the young man; the third was for God. If, said I, this stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side — or, loving her not, if he feels the obligation, pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection — he will, at least, make some effort to save her. If *that* fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it; and he will die as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But, if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less: and why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No; *let* him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl who now, upon the least shadow of failure in *him*, must, by the fiercest of translations — must, without time for a prayer — must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

XL. But craven he was not: sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down: already its gloomy shadow darkened above him; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a-day: ah! what a sublime thing

does courage seem, when some fearful summons on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some tumultuous crisis, from which lie two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, "One way lies hope ; take the other, and mourn for ever !" How grand a triumph, if, even then, amidst the raving of all around him, and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation — is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek his counsel from *Him* !

XLI. For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more of his seventy he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five more, perhaps, he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for light that should guide him to the better choice. Then suddenly he rose ; stood upright ; and, by a powerful strain upon the reins, raising his horse's fore-feet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind-legs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved ; except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done ; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late : fifteen of the seventy seconds may still be unexhausted ; and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry ! for the flying moments — *they* hurry ! Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man ! for the cruel hoofs of our horses — *they* also hurry ! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for *him*, if human energy can suffice ; faithful was he that drove to his terrific duty ; faithful was the horse to *his* command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand, by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger

half of the little equipage had then cleared our over-towering shadow : *that* was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage — was *that* certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin ? What power could answer the question ? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other ? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly, than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. *That* must the young man have felt too plainly. His back was now turned to us ; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril ; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed — that all was finished as regarded any effort of *his*. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle ; and perhaps in his heart he was whispering, “ Father, which art in heaven, do Thou finish above what I on earth have attempted.” Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit ! Even in that moment the thunder of collision spoke aloud. Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely, and not quite so far advanced, as to be accurately parallel with the near-wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to gaze upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its own tale, and wrote all its records on my heart for ever.

XLIII. Here was the map of the passion that now had finished. The horse was planted immovably, with his fore-feet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party might be supposed untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage — partly, perhaps, from the



violent torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it—as if it sympathised with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man trembled not, nor shivered. He sat like a rock. But *his* was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. As yet he dared not to look round; for he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady——

XLIII. But the lady——! Oh, heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing? Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of that unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night—from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight—from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love—suddenly as from the woods and fields—suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation—suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

XLIV. The moments were numbered; the strife was finished; the vision was closed. In the twinkling of an eye, our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.

## SECTION THE THIRD. — DREAM-FUGUE.

FOUNDED ON THE PRECEDING THEME OF SUDDEN DEATH.

“ Whence the sound  
 Of instruments, that made melodious chime,  
 Was heard, of harp and organ ; and who moved  
 Their stops and chords, was seen ; his volant touch  
 Instinct through all proportions, low and high,  
 Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.

*Par. Lost, B. XI.*

*Tumultuosissimamente.*

XLV. PASSION of sudden death ! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted signs !<sup>1</sup> — rapture of panic taking the shape (which amongst tombs in churches I have seen) of woman bursting her sepulchral bonds — of woman’s Ionic form bending forward from the ruins of her grave with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped adoring hands — waiting, watching, trembling, praying for the trumpet’s call to rise from dust for ever ! Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity on the brink of almighty abysses ! — vision that didst start back, that didst reel away, like a shrivelling scroll from before the wrath of fire racing on the wings of the wind ! Epilepsy so brief of horror, wherefore is it that thou canst not die ? Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaics of dreams ? Fragment of music too passionate, heard once, and heard no more, what aileth thee, that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through all the worlds of sleep, and after forty years, have lost no element of horror ?

<sup>1</sup> “ *Averted signs* ” : — I read the course and changes of the lady’s agony in the succession of her involuntary gestures ; but it must be remembered that I read all this from the rear, never once catching the lady’s full face, and even her profile imperfectly.

## I.

XLVI. Lo, it is summer — almighty summer ! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide ; and on the ocean, tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating — she upon a fairy pinnacle, and I upon an English three-decker. Both of us are wooing gales of festal happiness within the domain of our common country, within that ancient watery park, within that pathless chase of ocean, where England takes her pleasure as a huntress through winter and summer, from the rising to the setting sun. Ah, what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnacle moved ! And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers — young women how lovely, young men how noble, that were dancing together, and slowly drifting towards *us* amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural carolling, and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnacle nears us, gaily she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music, and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter — all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnacle, meeting or overtaking her ? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow ? Was our shadow the shadow of death ? I looked over the bow for an answer, and, behold ! the pinnacle was dismantled ; the revel and the revellers were found no more ; the glory of the vintage was dust ; and the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas. “ But where,” and I turned to our crew — “ where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and clustering corymbi ? Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with *them* ? ” Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the mast-head, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried out, “ Sail on the weather beam ! Down she comes upon us : in seventy seconds she also will founder.”

## II.

XLVII. I looked to the weather side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaken with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sat mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a cross-bow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. "Are they mad?" some voice exclaimed from our deck. "Do they woo their ruin?" But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnacle. The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert spaces of the sea: whilst still by sight I followed her, as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling — rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying — there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden for ever in driving showers; and afterward, but when I know not, nor how,

## III.

XLVIII. Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl, adorned with a garland of white roses about her head for some great festival,

running along the solitary strand in extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic ; and often she looked back as to some dreadful enemy in the rear. But when I leaped ashore, and followed on her steps to warn her of a peril in front, alas ! from me she fled as from another peril, and vainly I shouted to her of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran ; round a promontory of rocks she wheeled out of sight ; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sands gathering above her head. Already her person was buried ; only the fair young head and the diadem of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens ; and, last of all, was visible one white marble arm. I saw by the early twilight this fair young head, as it was sinking down to darkness — saw this marble arm, as it rose above her head and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching, as at some false deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds — saw this marble arm uttering her dying hope, and then uttering her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm — these all had sunk ; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed ; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child, and over her blighted dawn.

XLIX. I sat, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by treachery of earth, our mother. But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar as from some great king's artillery, advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by echoes from the mountains. "Hush !" I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen — "hush ! — this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else" — and then I listened more profoundly, and whispered as I raised my head — "or else, oh heavens ! it is *victory* that is final, victory that swallows up all strife."

## IV.

L. Immediately, in trance, I was carried over land and sea to some distant kingdom, and placed upon a triumphal car, amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight, brooding over all the land, hid from us the mighty crowds that were weaving restlessly about ourselves as a centre : we heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived, within an hour, of a grandeur that measured itself against centuries ; too full of pathos they were, too full of joy, to utter themselves by other language than by tears, by restless anthems, and *Te Deums* reverberated from the choirs and orchestras of earth. These tidings we that sat upon the laurelled car had it for our privilege to publish amongst all nations. And already, by signs audible through the darkness, by snortings and tramlings, our angry horses, that knew no fear of fleshly weariness, upbraided us with delay. Wherefore *was* it that we delayed ? We waited for a secret word, that should bear witness to the hope of nations, as now accomplished for ever. At midnight the secret word arrived ; which word was — Waterloo and Recovered Christendom ! The dreadful word shone by its own light ; before us it went ; high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over the paths which we traversed. Every city, at the presence of the secret word, threw open its gates. The rivers were conscious as we crossed. All the forests, as we ran along their margins, shivered in homage to the secret word. And the darkness comprehended it.

LI. Two hours after midnight we approached a mighty Minster. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word, that rode before us, reached them with its golden light, silently they moved back upon their hinges ; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the grand aisle of the cathedral. Headlong was our pace ; and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and left of our course, the lamps, dying or sickening, kindled anew in sympathy with the secret word that was fly-

ing past. Forty leagues we might have run in the cathedral, and as yet no strength of morning light had reached us, when before us we saw the aerial galleries of organ and choir. Every pinnacle of the fretwork, every station of advantage amongst the traceries, was crested by white-robed choristers, that sang deliverance ; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept ; but at intervals that sang together to the generations, saying,

“Chant the deliverer’s praise in every tongue,”

and receiving answer from afar,

“Such as once in heaven and earth were sung.”

And of their chanting was no end ; of our headlong pace was neither pause nor slackening.

LII. Thus, as we ran like torrents — thus, as we swept with bridal rapture over the Campo Santo<sup>1</sup> of the cathedral graves — suddenly we became aware of a vast necropolis rising upon the far-off horizon — a city of sepulchres, built within the saintly cathedral for the warrior dead that rested from their feuds on earth. Of purple granite was the necropolis ; yet, in the first minute, it lay like a purple stain upon the horizon, so mighty was the distance. In the second minute it trembled through many changes, growing into terraces and towers of wondrous altitude, so mighty was the pace. In the third minute already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central

<sup>1</sup> “*Campo Santo*”: — It is probable that most of my readers will be acquainted with the history of the Campo Santo (or cemetery) at Pisa, composed of earth brought from Jerusalem from a bed of sanctity, as the highest prize which the noble piety of crusaders could ask or imagine. To readers who are unacquainted with England, or who (being English) are yet unacquainted with the cathedral cities of England, it may be right to mention that the graves within-side the cathedrals often form a flat pavement over which carriages and horses *might* run ; and perhaps a boyish remembrance of one particular cathedral, across which I had seen passengers walk and burdens carried, as about two centuries back they were through the middle of St. Paul’s in London, may have assisted my dream.

aisle, strode forward with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs — bas-reliefs of battles and of battle-fields; battles from forgotten ages — battles from yesterday — battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers — battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did *we* run; where the towers curved, there did *we* curve. With the flight of swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood, wheeling round headlands — like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests — faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions, kindled warrior instincts, amongst the dust that lay around us — dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Crécy to Trafalgar. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now were we abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when coming up this aisle to meet us we beheld afar off a female child, that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists, which went before her, hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played — but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked down upon her from the mighty shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us; face to face she rode, as if danger there were none. “Oh, baby!” I exclaimed, “shalt thou be the ransom for Waterloo? Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee!” In horror I rose at the thought; but then also, in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured on a bas-relief — a Dying Trumpeter. Solemnly from the field of battle he rose to his feet; and, unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it, in his dying anguish, to his stony lips — sounding once, and yet once again; proclamation that, in *thy* ears, oh baby! spoke from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and aboriginal

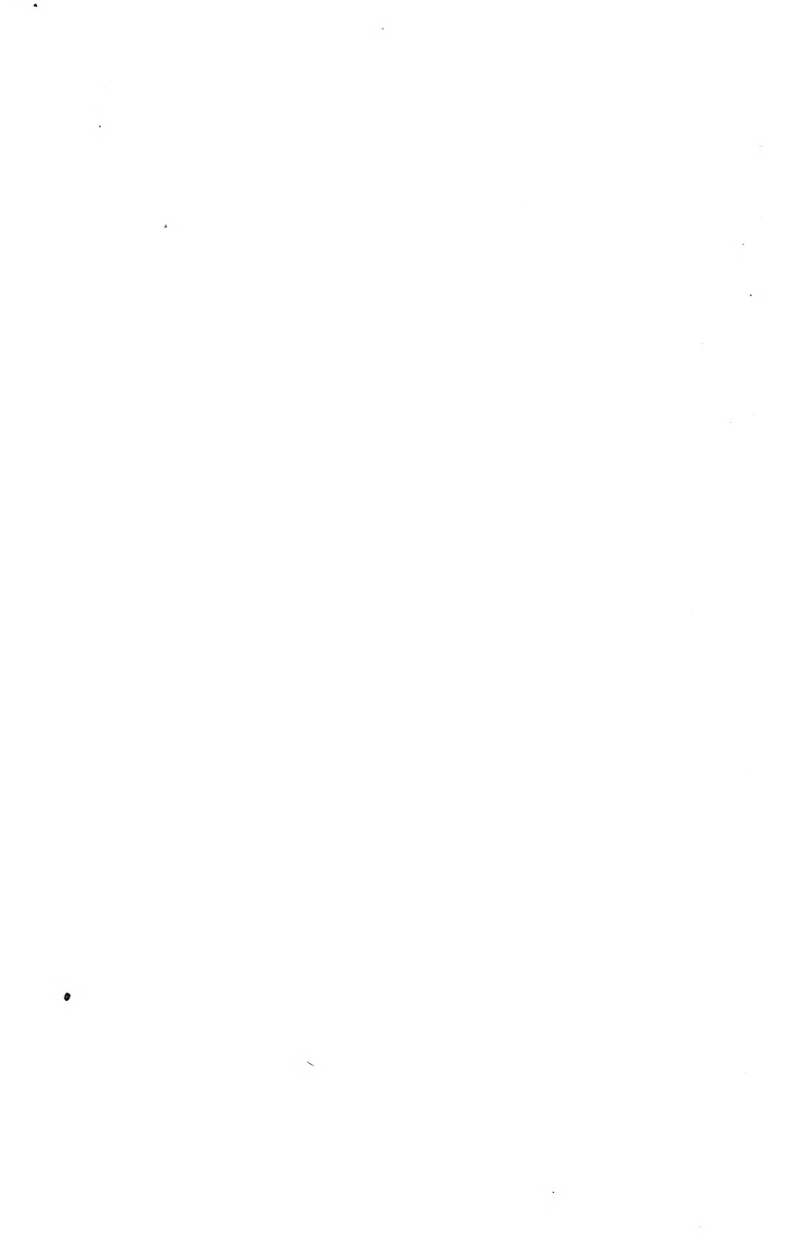


silence. The choir had ceased to sing. The hoofs of our horses, the dreadful rattle of our harness, the groaning of our wheels, alarmed the graves no more. By horror the bas-relief had been unlocked unto life. By horror we, that were so full of life, we men and our horses, with their fiery fore-legs rising in mid air to their everlasting gallop, were frozen to a bas-relief. Then a third time the trumpet sounded ; the seals were taken off all pulses ; life, and the frenzy of life, tore into their channels again ; again the choir burst forth in sunny grandeur, as from the muffling of storms and darkness ; again the thunderings of our horses carried temptation into the graves. One cry burst from our lips, as the clouds, drawing off from the aisle, showed it empty before us — “ Whither has the infant fled ? — is the young child caught up to God ? ” Lo ! afar off, in a vast recess, rose three mighty windows to the clouds ; and on a level with their summits, at height insuperable to man, rose an altar of purest alabaster. On its eastern face was trembling a crimson glory. A glory was it from the reddening dawn that now streamed *through* the windows ? Was it from the crimson robes of the martyrs painted *on* the windows ? Was it from the bloody bas-reliefs of earth ? There, suddenly, within that crimson radiance, rose the apparition of a woman’s head, and then of a woman’s figure. The child it was — grown up to woman’s height. Clinging to the horns of the altar, voiceless she stood — sinking, rising, raving, despairing ; and behind the volume of incense, that, night and day, streamed upwards from the altar, dimly was seen the fiery font, and the shadow of that dreadful being who should have baptized her with the baptism of death. But by her side was kneeling her better angel, that hid his face with wings ; that wept and pleaded for *her* ; that prayed when *she* could *not* ; that fought with Heaven by tears for *her* deliverance ; which also, as he raised his immortal countenance from his wings, I saw, by the glory in his eye, that from Heaven he had won at last.

## V.

LIII. Then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but muttered at intervals — gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense — threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter! — with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing — didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo — farewell love, and farewell anguish — rang through the dreadful *sanctus*. Oh, darkness of the grave! that from the crimson altar and from the fiery font wert visited and searched by the effulgence in the angel's eye — were these indeed thy children? Poms of life, that, from the burials of centuries, rose again to the voice of perfect joy, did ye indeed mingle with the festivals of Death? Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues through the mighty cathedral, I saw the quick and the dead that sang together to God, together that sang to the generations of man. All the hosts of jubilation, like armies that ride in pursuit, moved with one step. Us, that, with laurelled heads, were passing from the cathedral, they overtook, and, as with a garment, they wrapped us round with thunders greater than our own. As brothers we moved together; to the dawn that advanced — to the stars that fled; rendering thanks to God in the highest — that, having hid His face through one generation behind thick clouds of War, once again was ascending — from the Campo Santo of Waterloo was ascending — in the visions of Peace; rendering thanks for thee, young girl! whom, having overshadowed with His ineffable passion of death, suddenly did God relent; suffered thy angel to turn aside His arm; and even in thee, sister unknown! shown to me for a moment only to be hidden for ever, found an occasion to glorify His goodness. A thousand times, amongst the phantoms of sleep, have I seen thee entering the gates of the golden dawn — with the secret word riding before thee — with the armies of the grave behind thee; seen thee sinking, rising, raving,

despairing ; a thousand times in the worlds of sleep have seen thee followed by God's angel through storms ; through desert seas ; through the darkness of quicksands ; through dreams, and the dreadful revelations that are in dreams — only that at the last, with one sling of His victorious arm, He might snatch thee back from ruin, and might emblazon in thy deliverance the endless resurrections of His love !



## NOTES

### JOAN OF ARC

THE essay was first published in the March and August numbers of *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 1847 (volume xiv, pages 184 and 535. The March number contained also De Quincey's *Orthographic Mutineers*, and the August number his *Secret Societies*). It was reprinted, with many omissions and corrections, for De Quincey's own collective edition (*Selections, Grave and Gay, from Writings Published and Unpublished*), in a volume entitled *Miscellanies: Chiefly Narrative* (Edinburgh: James Hogg & Sons, 1858, page 246).

4. *sceptre was departing from Judah*. See *Genesis* xlix. 10.

The Biblical language is the more appropriate since the prophecy is of the Messiah, who was born of the lineage of David. Notice other Biblical passages in this essay.

4. *apparitors*. See a large dictionary. De Quincey was thinking, perhaps, of the Latin original.

4. *en contumace*, in contumacy; a legal phrase, intelligible from the context. No reason is apparent for putting it into French.

4. *as even yet may happen*. Joan of Arc is now widely revered by the French people as an embodiment of the French national spirit. See pages xxxviii-xxxix.

4. *To suffer and to do*. In the original magazine article the idea is elaborated: "To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; to *do*—never for thyself, always for others; to *suffer*—never in the persons of generous champions, always in thy own:—that was thy destiny," etc.

5. *volleying flames*. The word *volley* is now associated mainly with the discharge of a gun. Its etymology, which see, will suggest the earlier associations that De Quincey had in mind.

5. *The lilies of France*. The fleurs-de-lis (see page 16) of the French flag under the monarchy, supplanted by the tricolor of the republic.

5. *wrath . . . wither them.* The allusion is doubtless to the overthrow of the French monarchy in the Revolution.

5. *What reason is there for taking up.* The reason is apparent from the sub-title in *Tait's Magazine* and in De Quincey's collective edition, which reads *In Reference to M. Michelet's History of France*. The break at this point of the essay suggests that De Quincey took occasion from the appearance of Michelet's history to expand a sketch that he had written previously. If he could have held the tone of the preceding paragraphs, no one could have dreamed of asking a reason. Such prose is its own all-sufficient reason. But it was De Quincey's fatal weakness that he could never discern the impertinent folly of bringing his readers up with a violent jar, of affronting the very sensibilities that he had awakened. From a page of high imaginative eloquence we turn to a page of smug provincialism and shallow pretence of learning.

5. *mad . . . as March hutes.* Though Michelet has, indeed, his faults as an historian, De Quincey was the last man in the world to point them out. The cheap jibes of this passage could not have been written by any one who really knew either French history or the French people. The phrase "rhapsody of incoherence" sounds startlingly like an enemy's description of De Quincey's own style (see page xxvii). With a little malice and a little ingenuity, it might even be made to fit this very essay. And the two sentences beginning "Facts, and the consequences" expose De Quincey's blindness to his own most glaring faults. He, at least, was never drawn back "from the giddiest heights of speculation" by any regard for facts; and his "natural politeness," which is well vouched for by his friends, never deterred him from ignoring "a large audience waiting for him on earth, and gazing upward in anxiety for his return. Return, therefore, he does" — rarely.

5. *recovered liberty.* The Bourbon kings, restored by the allies after the final overthrow of Napoleon, had been once more expelled by the revolution of 1830.

6. *linked to the . . . shore.* Apparently De Quincey is in some vague way applying the towing of small boats on rivers, as commonly on the Thames, to coastwise towing on the ocean ("stretch away out of sight"). The figure is a puzzle in navigation.

6. *falconer's lure.* A decoy to recall a trained falcon or hawk. Investigate in a large dictionary *falconer*, *lure*, and *hawking*.

6. *Chery Chase, or The Hunting of the Cheriot*, perhaps the most famous of English ballads. See Addison's *Spectator*, papers 70 and 74. The perverted quotation is from the opening: —

The stout Erle of Northumberland  
 A vow to God did make  
 His pleasure in the Scottish woods  
 Three sommers days to take.

6. *The angel of research* stood less often by the side of De Quincey than *the angel of meditation*. See pages xxx, xxxix-xl.

7. *Pucelle d'Orléans*, the Maid of Orleans. Joan is often so called, from her brilliant relief of that city.

7. *Delenda*, etc. Victorious England must be destroyed. "*Delenda est Karthago* [Carthage] is the version of Florus (ii. 15) of the words used by Cato the Censor, just before the Third Punic War, whenever he was called upon to record his vote in the Senate on any subject under discussion." — TURK.

7. (foot-note.) The publication actually began in 1841, and had been completed and published (1849) before De Quincey revised this essay for Hogg's collective edition.

8. *hideous bigotry* is the natural language of a writer who had bigotries on the other side.

8. *the magnanimous justice of Englishmen* is not discernible, as Professor Hart remarks, in Shakespeare's *King Henry VI, Part I*.

9. *cis . . . trans*, "on this side — on that," or "hither — farther." The prepositions were compounded in Latin with the names of natural boundaries; e. g., *Gallia cisalpina*, *Gallia transalpina*, Gaul on this (the Italian) side of the Alps, Gaul beyond the Alps, or hither Gaul and farther Gaul.

9. *letter X*. Compare page 77 and the foot-note. Victor Hugo's description of Waterloo in *Les Misérables* is similarly based on a capital A.

9. *that odious man*. Compare pages 16-17. De Quincey's "systematic hatred" is directed against a fabrication of his fancy. Of Joan's father practically nothing is known. Perhaps De Quincey's hatred was first aroused by Shakespeare. See *King Henry VI, Part I*, v, 4.

10. *piety to France*, in the original Latin sense of *pious* and *pietas*; i. e., filial devotion, as in Virgil's *pious Aeneas*.

11. *parts in one drama*. The conception is characteristic of De Quincey's habitual view of the events of history. They took their "stations" in his mind, not so much according to their logical relations as to what he calls (pages 73-74) their "scenical" grouping. Compare "section in a vast mysterious drama" (page 12), and the Introduction, page xxx.

11. *unweaving of doom*. See some picture of the ancient Fates — Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos.

11. *Anjou . . . emperor*. The allusions here may be traced by referring, in some standard manual, to the “*Sicilian Vespers*” (1282), the bloody catastrophe of the struggles between the house of Anjou and the Emperor Konradin.

12. *feudalism . . . Crécy*. This battle (1346) is marked by historians as the downfall of chivalry, because the French knights had to yield before the serried archery of the English common soldiers. Warfare, from that time, depended less and less on the valour of individuals, and more and more on the discipline of masses of men.

13. *Misereres . . . Te Deums*, psalms of penitence — canticles of praise. Like most of the psalms and canticles in the services of the Church, the *Te Deum Laudamus* (“We praise Thee as God”) is called by the first words of the Latin version once used universally throughout western Europe. *Miserere* (“Have mercy”) is part of the title of several penitential psalms (e. g., the fifty-first), and occurs in many canticles (e. g., in the *Agnus Dei* at Mass) as a refrain. Neither of these hymns is particularly characteristic of “the Romish Church.”

13. *a boundless forest*. Our history on this continent has given to our use of the word *forest* suggestions of wildness and density that did not attach to it in England. The famous New Forest is anything but a wilderness; and Shakespeare’s Forest of Arden was conceived by him quite differently from Longfellow’s “forest primeval” in *Evangeline*. Investigate the word in a large dictionary.

13. “*Abbeys there were*.” Professor Turk locates the reference in Wordsworth’s *Peter Bell*, Part ii. De Quincey quotes inexactly from memory.

14. *mysterious fawns*. The adventures of knights-errant narrated in the mediæval romances not infrequently arise from the pursuit of some mysteriously elusive beast, who leads them on and on into the forest. The romantic situation is very like that of Fitz-James in Scott’s *Lady of the Lake*.

14. *marches . . . marquis*. What is the connection between these words? Investigate their etymology.

14. *Sir Roger de Corerley*; a quotation from memory, the answer having been made to Sir Roger. (See the end of *Spectator* No. 122.) Professor Turk suggests that De Quincey may have been thinking of *Spectator* No. 117 (on witchcraft).



15. *not a shepherdess*. The point is not settled by the mere word *bergereta*. The rest of the paragraph is fanciful *a priori* (see page 33, and note) argument. Michelet "rests upon" the evidence as a whole (see T. Douglas Murray, *Jeanne d'Arc*, pages 9-10, 19-20).

15. *Bergereta*, shepherdess, a mediaeval Latin form for the French *bergerette*.

16. *praedial servant*, a servant attached to the land. No excuse is apparent for this piece of pedantry.

16. *Chevalier of St. Louis*, a member, by royal award for military service, of a French honorary order. Professor Turk observes that *Chevalier* was the lowest rank in this order, and that it is not properly a form of address. The passages below mean: "My daughter, have you fed the pig?" "Maid of Orleans, have you saved the royal standard?"

17. *detection of the dauphin*. Again De Quincey's objection is purely *a priori*. The famous incident is no more wonderful than others equally vouched for in the Maid's wonderful career.

17. *coup d'essai*, literally stroke of trial; i. e., public test, as De Quincey might apparently as well have said. Compare *coup de main*, page 21.

17. *pricks for sheriffs*. See *Century Dictionary*, under *prick* (verb) 10 (b), and *Pricking for sheriffs* under *pricking* (noun).

18. *un peu fort*, a little strong, a bit too much.

19. *The English boy*, Henry VI, the English candidate for the throne of France. His mother was the eldest daughter of Charles VI of France (see page 11), who declared Henry V of England his heir. Henry V having meantime died, the throne was disputed by the "English boy," supported by the English and Burgundians, and the French dauphin, whom Joan had crowned in due form as Charles VII.

19. *ovens of Rheims*. The figure is somewhat clearer in its original form: "The first man drawn from the oven of coronation at Rheims, is the man that is baked into a king. All others are counterfeits, made of base Indian meal—damaged by sea-water." This is the end of the first installment in *Tait's Magazine*. The figure was perhaps suggested by the famous bakeries of Rheims.

19. *a parte ante*, literally from the part before, by anticipation; i. e., Joan *anticipated*, according to the language ascribed to her by Southey, the doctrine of the deist Matthew Tindal.

19. *chapels . . . oratories*, a diffuse and inaccurate way of saying *in church*. Joan went, of course, to her parish church. Chapels she

may well have entered in the course of her campaigns; but what she may have had to do with "consecrated oratories" is not clear.

20. "*Paradise Regained*," Book I, 196. In the original magazine article only the first line is quoted, and this inaccurately from memory.

20. *France Delivered*, in imitation of a celebrated Italian poem, *Jerusalem Delivered*, by Tasso.

20. *passion*, suffering, as at page 88, and frequently in the Book of Common Prayer.

20. *might have been done*. See the longer original sentence as quoted at page xxxiii.

21. *she sung mass*; i. e., she had Mass sung, with especial intention of thanksgiving. So, below, "she crowned him." Literally, of course no one is said to sing Mass but the priest at the altar, the "celebrant." The meaning is clear enough; but De Quincey is less precise in matters of religion than in many others. See note below on *divine Litany* (69) and above on *oratories* (19).

21. *coup-de-main*, bold and sudden assault; literally, an assault without artillery.

21. *excepting one man*. It is not clear whom De Quincey had in mind.

22. *the inappreciable end*; i. e., too great to be appreciated (as in "inappreciable value," page 61), an obsolete sense of the word, which means commonly quite the reverse — too small to be appreciated.

22. *as M. Michelet*. It was Michelet that furnished De Quincey with the explanation on which he insists. Michelet does, indeed, impute malice; but his explanation of the motive is substantially what is urged by De Quincey himself.

22. *Nolebat*, etc. "She was unwilling to use her sword or to kill any one."

23. *Bishop of Beauvais*. Pierre Cauchon.

23. "*Bishop that art*." See Macbeth I, v, 13.

24. *triple crown*. The papal tiara.

24. *horrid spectacle*, from the point of view of English traditions. The French traditions in general give more power to the judge; but it should not be assumed therefore that French criminal trials are usually like this of the Maid.

25. *a wretched Dominican*. Which of the two Dominicans concerned in the prosecution De Quincey means is not clear. Very likely, as Professor Hart suggests, his memory was at fault.

27. *four winds*. Professor Turk suggests *Ezekiel* xxxvii. 1-10, especially verse 9.

28. *daughter of Cæsars*. Her father was the German Emperor, Francis I. The German word *Kaiser* still echoes the mediaeval tradition that the "Holy Roman Empire" founded by Charlemagne succeeded to the fallen empire of the Roman Cæsars.

29. *foule*, ugly. Investigate *foul* in a large dictionary.

29. (foot-notes.) *Michelet's fury against . . . English* is in great part a fiction of De Quincey's own prejudice against the French. The four cases cited are all quite incidental, all magnified by De Quincey to the point of distortion, and some, at least, urged with provincial bad taste. Michelet's remark about the *Imitatio* is in a chapter quite separate from those on Joan.

31. (foot-note) *burgoo*, "a thick oatmeal gruel or porridge used chiefly by seamen. The *Phil. Dict.* [New English Dictionary] adds 'derivation unknown.' According to London *Athen[æum]*, October 6, 1888, the word is a corruption of Arabic *burghul*." — HART.

32. *personal rancour*. Professor Hart observes justly that De Quincey's distinction is not warranted by history.

33. *a priori*. Argument *a priori* is argument from general, accepted principles, from one's stock of fixed ideas. The phrase is used in contradistinction to *a posteriori*, argument from the evidence in the particular case. The two terms correspond roughly to the more familiar deduction and induction. *A priori* is argument from reflection; *a posteriori*, argument from evidence. Much of De Quincey's own argument is *a priori*. See notes above to pages 15 and 17.

36. *English Prince, Regent*, John, Duke of Bedford.

36. *my Lord of Winchester*, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, afterwards Cardinal. Both these nobles are personages in Shakespeare's *King Henry VI*.

36. *who is this?* See *Isaiah* lxiii. 1.

## THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* for October, 1849, contained an essay by De Quincey entitled *The English Mail-Coach, or The Glory of Motion* (volume lxvi, page 485). It ended with the incident of the proud mother, the end of Section I (page 69 of this edition); and there was no hint of continuation. In the December number appeared another essay, entitled *The Vision of Sudden Death* (volume lxvi, page 741), prefaced by the following note:—

The reader is to understand this present paper, in its two sections of *The Vision*, &c., and *The Dream-Fugue*, as connected with a previous paper on *The English Mail-Coach*, published in the Magazine for October. The ultimate object was the Dream-Fugue, as an attempt to wrestle with the utmost efforts of music in dealing with a colossal form of impassioned horror. The Vision of Sudden Death contains the mail-coach incident, which did really occur, and did really suggest the variations of the Dream, here taken up by the Fugue, as well as other variations not now recorded. Confluent with these impressions, from the terrific experience on the Manchester and Glasgow mail, were other and more general impressions, derived from long familiarity with the English mail, as developed in the former paper; impressions, for instance, of animal beauty and power, of rapid motion, at that time unprecedented, of connexion with the government and public business of a great nation, but, above all, of connexion with the national victories at an unexampled crisis,—the mail being the privileged organ for publishing and dispersing all news of that kind. From this function of the mail, arises naturally the introduction of Waterloo into the fourth variation of the Fugue; for the mail itself having been carried into the dreams by the incident in the Vision, naturally all the accessory circumstances of pomp and grandeur investing this national carriage followed in the train of the principal image.

These two essays were taken together and recast throughout by De Quincey for his own collective edition (*Selections, Grave and Gay, from Writings Published and Unpublished*) in a volume entitled *Miscellanies* (London and Edinburgh, James Hogg & Sons; no date; page 287). De Quincey's account of the composition and revision appeared as number 4 of the Explanatory Notices prefacing this volume. It is as follows:—

“*The English Mail-Coach*”:—This little paper, according to my original intention, formed part of the “*Suspiria de Profundis*,” from which,

for a momentary purpose, I did not scruple to detach it, and to publish it apart, as sufficiently intelligible even when dislocated from its place in a larger whole. To my surprise, however, one or two critics, not carelessly in conversation, but deliberately in print, professed their inability to apprehend the meaning of the whole, or to follow the links of the connection between its several parts. I am myself as little able to understand where the difficulty lies, or to detect any lurking obscurity, as these critics found themselves to unravel my logic. Possibly I may not be an indifferent and neutral judge in such a case. I will therefore sketch a brief abstract of the little paper according to my original design, and then leave the reader to judge how far this design is kept in sight through the actual execution.

Thirty-seven years ago, or rather more, accident made me, in the dead of night, and of a night memorably solemn, the solitary witness to an appalling scene, which threatened instant death in a shape the most terrific to two young people whom I had no means of assisting, except in so far as I was able to give them a most hurried warning of their danger; but even *that* not until they stood within the very shadow of the catastrophe, being divided from the most frightful of deaths by scarcely more, if more at all, than seventy seconds.

Such was the scene, such in its outline, from which the whole of this paper radiates as a natural expansion. This scene is circumstantially narrated in Section the Second, entitled "The Vision of Sudden Death."

But a movement of horror, and of spontaneous recoil from this dreadful scene, naturally carried the whole of that scene, raised and idealised, into my dreams, and very soon into a rolling succession of dreams. The actual scene, as looked down upon from the box of the mail, was transformed into a dream, as tumultuous and changing as a musical fugue. This troubled dream is circumstantially reported in Section the Third, entitled "Dream-Fugue upon the theme of Sudden Death." What I had beheld from my seat upon the mail; the scenical strife of action and passion, of anguish and fear, as I had there witnessed them moving in ghostly silence; this duel between life and death, narrowing itself to a point of such exquisite evanescence as the collision neared; all these elements of the scene blended, under the law of association, with the previous and permanent features of distinction investing the mail itself: which features at that time lay — 1st, in velocity unprecedented; 2dly, in the power and beauty of the horses; 3dly, in the official connection with the government of a great nation; and 4thly, in the function, almost a consecrated function, of publishing and diffusing through the land the great political events, and especially the great battles during a conflict of unparalleled grandeur. These honorary distinctions are all described circumstantially in the First or introductory Section ("The Glory of Motion"). The three first were distinctions maintained at all times; but the fourth and grandest belonged exclusively to the war with Napoleon; and this it was which most naturally introduced Waterloo into the dream. Waterloo, I understood, was the particular feature of the "Dream-Fugue" which my censors were

least able to account for. Yet surely Waterloo, which, in common with every other great battle, it had been our special privilege to publish over all the land, most naturally entered the dream under the license of our privilege. If not — if there be anything amiss — let the Dream be responsible. The Dream is a law to itself: and as well quarrel with a rainbow for showing, or for *not* showing, a secondary arch. So far as I know, every element in the shifting movements of the Dream derived itself either primarily from the incidents of the actual scene, or from secondary features associated with the mail. For example, the cathedral aisle derived itself from the mimic combination of features which grouped themselves together at the point of approaching collision — viz., an arrow-like section of the road, six hundred yards long, under the solemn lights described, with lofty trees meeting overhead in arches. The guard's horn, again — a humble instrument in itself — was yet glorified as the organ of publication for so many great national events. And the incident of the Dying Trumpeter, who rises from a marble bas-relief, and carries a marble trumpet to his marble lips for the purpose of warning the female infant, was doubtless secretly suggested by my own imperfect effort to seize the guard's horn, and to blow a warning blast. But the Dream knows best; and the Dream, I say again, is the responsible party.

In an article for the *Saturday Review* of Feb. 23, 1895 (volume 79, page 246), entitled *How De Quincey Worked*, Professor Dowden examines the revision in detail:—

“An interleaved copy, crowded with De Quincey's corrections . . . was set up by the printers for Hogg; but the author was not yet satisfied; he went again to work; dealt with the proof-sheets as if they were a first copy; omitted, added, and emended; again interleaved some pages with blank paper, which again are crowded with alterations in his dainty and scholarly handwriting. And some of the most striking effects of his lofty and elaborate rhetoric were reached only in the final revision.”

41. *married the daughter of a duke*. Apparently this feat was accomplished by another Palmer; but the matter is of no consequence.

41. (foot-note.) The play upon the word *invention* arises from its being used by the ecclesiastical calendar in a technical sense of discovery or recovery. *Inventio sancte crucis* means the recovery of the holy cross.

41. *anarchies*. Investigate the etymology. Is the word usual in the plural? Exactly what does it mean here?

42. *apocalyptic rials*. Apocalypse is the Greek derivative sometimes used as the title of the last book of the Bible, which is more familiarly called by the corresponding Latin derivative word Revelation. See chapters xv and xvi.

42. *Te Drum*. See note to page 13.

42. *The Victories of England*. De Quincey's point of view is too intensely British for any such impartiality as might be expected from an historian. He loses few opportunities for a fling at the French, whom he seems to detest more cordially than intelligently. Compare pages 5-6, 51 and 61 (with the foot-notes). A French point of view may be had from the Waterloo chapter in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, or from Erckmann-Chatrian's story, *Waterloo*.

43. *most universities . . . one single college*. De Quincey's terms apply only to Great Britain and the United States, and even there rather loosely. Investigate *university* and *college* in a large dictionary.

43. *Michaelmas, Lent, Easter, and Act*. "These might be called respectively the autumn, winter, spring, and summer terms. Michaelmas, the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, is on September 29. Hilary and Trinity are other names for Lent term and Act term respectively. Act term is the last term of the academic year; its name is that originally given to a disputation for a Master's degree; such disputations took place at the end of the year generally, and hence gave a name to the summer term. Although the rules concerning residence at Oxford are more stringent than in De Quincey's time, only eighteen weeks' residence is required during the year, six in Michaelmas, six in Lent, and six in Easter and Act."—TURK.

44. The humour of this paragraph is characteristic of De Quincey in being somewhat recondite. Consult a large dictionary for the words *quaternion*, *attaint* (compare *attainted*, page 50), *pariah*, and *assizes*.

44. *privileged sulle-à-manger*. The dining-rooms of many English inns are still designated by classes as "coffee" and "commercial."

44. (foot-note.) *De non apparentibus*. The "fiction" is that the law regards things not appearing (i. e., not in evidence) as not existing.

45. (foot-note.) *snobs . . . nob*s. See the *Century Dictionary*.

45. *Penumbra* is a term of astronomy. *Construction* and *constructively*, like *attaint* on the previous page, are terms of law. *Quaternion* (43) is used primarily in mathematics; and from mathematics comes the clause (81) about "the radix of the series." *Jury-reins* (47) is drawn from navigation. *Systole* and *diastole* (50) are technical terms of physiology. *A fortiori* (51) is a term of logic. *Limited atmosphere* (80) is a reference to physics. Note other terms derived from special sciences, with a view to estimating the range and character of De Quincey's vocabulary.

45. *the analogy of theatres.* An argument by analogy (*a pari*) is an argument from a parallel case, usually an argument from history. It amounts to saying, Since this was true in such-and-such a former case, it will probably be true in this case also. The force of the argument depends on the closeness of the parallel; and, conversely, its weakness, as in the analogy refuted here, is that an opponent can often urge an important point of difference. This method of argument is very popular, and very often abused by the citation of cases that are made to appear parallel, though in fact they are not. De Quincey was very fond of it. Observe that the argument here, like many of De Quincey's others, is largely imaginary. The playful insistence on "drawing room" instead of "garret" is also, in effect, argument by analogy; and so is the Welshman's citation of the proverb at page 53. Compare the note on *a fortiori*, page 51.

45. *metaphysical*, used humorously here; in what sense? It was De Quincey's own inveterate habit to argue metaphysically.

45. *attics . . . garrets.* The singular would be more usual. The *New English Dictionary* cites similar cases of *garrets*, but not of *attics*. Professor Hart says that both are occasionally heard in this country.

46. *ottoman.* See the *Century Dictionary*.

46. *jump.* A use of the word more common in the seventeenth century than in De Quincey's time. See a large dictionary.

This paragraph, but for the pedantic "constructively present by representation," is in De Quincey's best vein of humour. Less elaborate than his usual witticisms, it is the more direct and natural.

46. *hammer-cloth*, "a cloth covering the driver's seat or 'box' in a state or family coach." The derivation is unknown. De Quincey's conjecture that it is a corruption of hamper-cloth is not corroborated. (*New English Dictionary*.)

47. *jury-reins*, after the analogy of jury-mast, "a temporary mast put up in place of one that has been broken or carried away." (*New English Dictionary*.) "According to Skeat's letter of March 8, 1884 (in *London Academy*), *jury* is for *ajury*, from Anglo-French *ajuere* — Latin *adjuvare*, 'to aid.' A jury-mast is thus an aid-mast, an adjutory mast." — HART.

47. *ça ira*, literally "that will go"; the refrain of a popular street song of the French Revolution.

47. *warming-pans* are more antiquated than stage-coaches. In the days before stoves they were filled with hot embers from the hearth,



to warm the otherwise icy sheets of our ancestors. To-day they are occasionally seen, like spinning-wheels, as parlour ornaments.

47. *hustings* "(O. E. *husting*, O. N. *hús-thing*, household assembly). . . . The temporary platform from which, previous to 1872, the nomination of candidates for Parliament was made, and on which these stood while addressing the electors. Hence, contextually, the proceedings at a parliamentary election." (*New English Dictionary*.)

48. The paragraph on the safety of the mail-coach is a typical instance of De Quincey's fanciful playing with an idea. It is couched, partly in terms of astrology ("allocating to a particular moon," "house of life"), partly in terms of law ("posse," "legal domicile," "felony," "nuisances," "arson"), the idea of safety as a matter of one's lucky star being whimsically involved with the idea of safety before the law.

48. *noters and protesters*, from *note* and *protest* in the commercial sense, which see in a large dictionary. Of course in the following clause De Quincey puns. Professor Hart urges that "since *noters* and *protesters* are coupled together as persons who make the debtor's life miserable, the word cannot mean the *maker* of a promissory note. Can it be for *noterer*, an archaic form of *notary*?" The suggestion hardly seems plausible. If De Quincey is taking the point of view of a debtor, *protester* is equally out of line. If he wishes to imply the point of view of a creditor, both *noter* and *protester* are clear enough; but both seem out of line with the context. In short, the passage is perplexing.

48. *house of life*. A term of astrology. See a large dictionary.

49. *parliamentary rat*. "*Rat*" seems to have been a slang term for a man that went over to the other party. See *Century Dictionary*, *rat* (n), 5.

49. *laesa majestas*, offence against the person of the emperor. The phrase is sometimes used to-day, with satirical implication, in its French form *lèse-majesté*.

49. *Aeneid*, Book II, line 311 (in the description of the burning of Troy): "Now falls the house of Deiphobus in wide ruin under the conquering fire; *now burns Ucalegon's nest*."

50. *quarterings*. See De Quincey's note to page 82.

50. *benefit of clergy*, the ancient right of the clergy to be tried in ecclesiastical courts, and hence to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. In the middle ages this "benefit" was practically granted to almost any one who could read, perhaps on the presump-

tion that he must be at least intending to take Holy Orders. See, in a large dictionary, the successive uses of the word *clerk*.

50-51. *Quarter Sessions*, the quarterly sittings of English local courts. The sittings of a court were also called, from the same derivation, *assizes*, as on pages 78 and 79.

51. *a potential station* seems to mean a station, or position, of power. The sense is unusual, perhaps unwarrantable. In any case, it is an instance of De Quincey's fondness for the recondite. The usual sense of the word appears in *potentially* at page 73. For the use of the word *station* compare *station of good will*, page 3.

51. *a fortiori (causa)*, literally "for a stronger (reason)," or practically "much more"; a term of logic used to describe a particular form of the argument by analogy (*a pari*). It may be called the much-more argument. "If God so clothed the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not *much more* clothe you, O ye of little faith?" *St. Matthew*, vi. 30. See note to page 45 on *analogy*.

52. *false, fleeting, perjured*, a quotation from *Richard III*, I, iv, 55.

52. *Brummagem*, a popular perversion of the word Birmingham. The city having become famous for the manufacture of cheap jewelry, Brummagem came to be synonymous with tawdriness. See the next page.

52. *jacobinical*. The name Jacobins, originally applied to a radical club in Paris during the French Revolution, was later applied to the whole radical party, and then generally to all who held extreme revolutionary doctrines.

52. *a tower of strength*. See *Richard III*, V, iii, 12.

53. *Omrahs*, etc. Professor Turk points out the reminiscence of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Book X, lines 18-20. Much of the paragraph is in playful imitation of the oriental style. The illustration may have been suggested by *Macbeth*, II, iv, 10-13.

53-54. *Roman pearls*. See *Century Dictionary* under *pearl*.

54. *6th of Edward Longshanks*; i. e., a law of the sixth year of Edward I; but of course the law is invented by De Quincey as a jest.

54. *modern . . . travelling cannot compare*. De Quincey was a conservative. Moreover in 1849, when this essay was written, railways were by no means the matter of course that they are to-day. Nowadays the associations of most people with "the Glory of Motion" are habitually with railways; and much that De Quincey felt from the stage-coach he might well have felt, had he lived forty years later,

from the railway. Railway travelling in his time had comparatively few possibilities of exhilaration. Even to-day this particular pleasure of travelling has been revealed largely through the applications of electricity. Later generations may find our enthusiasms as old-fashioned as we find De Quincey's. Because we enjoy a steam-boat it does not follow that there will be no more sail-boats; but the stage-coach, in our day, has become a pastime of the rich few. And even they now prefer the automobile. Though the speed of this last is "the product of blind, insensate agencies," at least it can be heard, seen, and felt to a degree inconceivable by the protesting essayist of 1849.

Five years later (1854) Thoreau, who certainly was not dazzled by "modern improvements" and who has some philosophic satire on railroads, yet felt a kind of poetry in modern transportation. See *Walden*, Chapter IV. Robert Louis Stevenson, who was much more a traveller than De Quincey, and no less an artist, found literary material in railroads. Mr. Kipling, who frankly admires modern machinery, and uses it too much, perhaps, in his stories, puts into the mouth of a Scotch engineer a hot rebuke of the attitude exemplified by De Quincey (*McAndrew's Hymn*, in *The Seven Seas*).

54. *non magna loquimur . . . vivimus*, "not 'we say great things,' but 'we live' them." Compare the word *grandiloquence*.

55. *Tidings fitted to convulse all nations*. The essential change in the conditions of announcing news is not from horses to steam; it is the telegraph. Such "gatherings of gazers" as De Quincey speaks of have now for their "centre" the bulletin-board of a telegraph office.

55. *lawny thickets of Marlborough forest*. See note to page 13, *boundless forest*.

56. *aristocratic distinctions in my favour*. De Quincey was the son of a Manchester merchant.

57. "*Say, all our praises.*" The quotation which De Quincey perverts is from Pope's *Moral Essays*, *Epistle III* (Of the Use of Riches), line 249.

58. (foot-note.) Apparently De Quincey has in mind the following description of King Lycurgus in the Knight's Tale:

Aboute his chaar ther wenten white Alauntz  
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,  
To huntun at the leon or the deer;  
And folowed hym with mosel fast ybounde,  
Colored of gold, and tourettes fyled rounde.

*Canterbury Tales*, A, 2152.

The *Alauntz* were dogs, not horses ; and the *tourettes* apparently were the swivel-rings through which their leashes passed. There is general similarity enough to warrant De Quincey's suggestion ; and it is more plausible than a derivation from the other and more common word *turret*. But Chaucer does not use it "in the same exact sense."

59-60. This paragraph suggests the grotesque incoherence of actual dreaming. For its style see page xxxvi. The latter part is in the language of heraldry.

60. (foot-note.) *conciliate*, apparently a typographical error for *conciliates*.

61. *down from London*. In England one always speaks of going *up* to London, and *down* from London to the country. Similarly the expedition of Cyrus recounted by Xenophon is described as *Anabasis* ; i. e., a going *up* (*aná*) to the capital of Persia.

61. *baubling*. "A baubling vessel was the captain of." *Twelfth Night*, v, i, 57.

62. *attelage* ; i. e., the coach with its horses.

62. *within the privilege of the post-office*. See De Quincey's note on page 56.

63. (foot-note.) De Quincey's rebuke to the imaginary mirth of an imaginary American is hardly convincing as argument ; for, after all, what he is talking of is distance. But the foot-note, being superfluous, is hardly worth debate.

64. *sun . . . just . . . setting*. The long twilight is one of the charms of an English summer.

65. *gentle or simple* ; the old, traditional sense of the words. See a large dictionary.

66. *coachman's person . . . intervening*, the coachman sitting, of course, on the right of the "box" and keeping, according to English custom, the left side of the road. See page 81.

66. *the gazette*, the official announcement. The earliest newspapers, being in fact merely official bulletins, were often called gazettes. When the scope of newspapers was expanded, the gazette was the name for the official part, as here. Later still, the word, losing its distinctive sense, was often taken as a title for the whole paper. The successive uses of the word may be traced in a large dictionary.

67. *Celtic . . . fey*. The word is not Celtic. Investigate.

68. The same kind of charge, on a larger scale, by French cavalry at Waterloo is made one of the most thrilling incidents of Victor

Hugo's description in *Les Misérables*. The two descriptions may well be compared.

68. *aceldama*. See a concordance to the Bible.

69. *Cæsar . . . at his last dinner party*. "Related by Suetonius in his life of Julius Cæsar, chapter lxxxvii : 'The day before he died, some discourse occurring at dinner in M. Lepidus' house upon the subject, which was the most agreeable way of dying, he expressed his preference for what is sudden and unexpected' (*repentinum inopinitumque prætulera*t). The story is told by Plutarch and Appian also." — TURK.

69. *divine Litany*. De Quincey seems to use *divine* here in affectionate admiration rather than with his usual technical precision. *Divine office* is the technical term for the antiphonal use of the Psalms in the monastic "hours." Perhaps he was thinking of this.

71. *βιθαβαρος* is a piece of pure pedantry. The word is unusual even in Greek, if indeed it can be proved to exist in this form ; and there is no excuse for a Greek word here. The Latin words used by Suetonius in the passage referred to (see note above to page 69) have no suggestion of violence. De Quincey's distinction is very plausible ; but it has no more warrant from the dictionaries than has his Greek barbarism. Professor Hart suggests that he got the word from the title of a treatise by John Donne (1644). Professor Turk calls attention to *Julius Cæsar*, II, ii, 33.

73. "Nature, from her seat." See *Paradise Lost*, ix, 782.

74. *jus dominii*, right of domain or ownership.

75. *jus gentium*, law of nations.

75. *assessor*, in the literal, etymological sense of one who sits beside. Perhaps De Quincey was thinking of Milton's use in *Paradise Lost*, vi, 679, where the word means "one who shares another's position, rank, or dignity" (*New English Dictionary*); perhaps of the other use to mean an assistant to a judge. Of course the word is used humorously. Properly, De Quincey was *assessor* to the coachman.

75. *Monstrum*, etc., *Aeneid*, III, 658, translated in the next sentence.

76. *Cyclops*. The *monstrum* of Virgil (see above) was one of the Cyclops.

76. *the art of conversation*. See pages xxi-xxiii, and De Quincey's essay on *Conversation*.

76. *me procrastinating*. See page xviii.

77. *aurigation*, literally charioteering, a word humorously coined for the occasion.

78. *without invitation and without applause*. The style reminds one of Dickens.

80. *halcyon*. Find the derivation of this word, to which is attached a pretty Greek myth.

81. *bespoke*, the common British term for clothes "made to order."

81. *right-hand side of the road*. In England this is "the wrong side," British custom keeping to the left. See note above to page 66.

81. *adverse*, in the Latin sense of coming to meet each other. The more usual sense appears in *adverse armies* (page 3).

82. *taxed cart*, the more intelligible form. The more usual is *tax-cart*, which see.

83. *parties*. Is this the vulgar use of the word?

84. *the shout of Achilles*. *Iliad*, xviii, 217.

88. *fugue*. Find a full definition of this term of music. Why is this section called a fugue?

88. "*whence the sound*," etc. This passage in Milton may have suggested also an eloquent figure in De Quincey's *Conversation*, in which the kindling of ideas between two talkers is compared to improvisation on the organ.

88. *woman's Ionic form*. De Quincey may have been thinking, as Professor Hart suggests, of the tradition that the proportions of Doric columns were derived from the ideal masculine figure, and that later modifications were similarly derived from the feminine figure. The tradition as repeated by Vitruvius (iv, chapter i) does not specifically refer to Ionic. Professor Turk suggests that De Quincey may have been thinking of a caryatid. However explained, the phrase seems more striking than apt.

89. *chase*. As in Chevy Chase (see page 6). Consult a large dictionary.

89. *corymbi*, in the original Greek sense of "a cluster of ivy-berries or grapes," not in the English sense, purely botanical, of a flower tuft or head. (*New English Dictionary*.)

90. *quarrel*. See the picture in the *Century Dictionary*.

93. *station of advantage*. Compare Macbeth, I, vi, 7.

94. *sweet oblivion of flowers*. "Look at nature. She never wearies of saying over her floral pater-noster. In the crevices of Cyclopean walls, — in the dust where men lie, dust also, — on the mounds that bury huge cities, the wreck of Nineveh and the Babel-

heap, — still that same sweet prayer and benediction. The Amen of Nature is always a flower." O. W. Holmes, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (1858), x.

96. *the dreadful sanctus*, the "Holy, Holy, Holy," or trisagion ; the climax of the preliminary or preparatory part of the Mass. Following the *sursum corda* ("Lift up your hearts"), it is introduced by the words "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven." Perhaps De Quincey had in mind these words of the English office (see page 256 of the American Prayer Book); perhaps he meant to suggest merely the moment of peculiar solemnity marked by the *sanctus* bell.





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